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# Artistic and Cultural Dialogues in the Late Medieval Mediterranean

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# Artistic and Cultural Dialogues in the Late Medieval Mediterranean



European  
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Horizon 2020  
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ArtMedGIS  
Project 699618-MSCA | H2020



FCT

Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia  
MINISTÉRIO DA CIÊNCIA, TECNOLOGIA E ENSINO SUPERIOR

palgrave  
macmillan

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Mediterranean Perspectives

ISBN 978-3-030-53365-6

ISBN 978-3-030-53366-3 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53366-3>

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The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

*To Leonardo,  
the fruit of your games and dreams*

## FOREWORD

Thankfully, the time is all but past when scholarly consensus regarded Islamic history and culture as Orientalized exotica—and, by extension, when al-Andalus was seen as a mere footnote or foil to the history of Europe, credited, at best, with the “transmission” of Classical knowledge to the Renaissance “West.” This outdated, teleological vision of the Middle Ages—characterized by an intuitive and uncritical Eurocentrism, self-confident Christian chauvinism, and an anachronistic embrace of racialized nationalist paradigms—is now broadly recognized as an outmoded relic and persists largely as the nostalgic refuge of reactionary xenophobic populism and those few scholars who serve as its megaphones.

We now recognize the Islamicate world as a subject of study in its own right, not as an appendage to the West, but as a constituent element. Moreover, we no longer imagine Christendom and Islam as coherent, homogenous, and well-bounded civilizational entities. The Platonized, essentializing perspective of the historical canon has given way to one which recognizes the variety, permeability and ambiguities that each of these socio-cultural categories embodied. Whereas before we saw only opposition between Islam and Christendom, we now see engagement. This engagement—manifested in both conflict and collaboration, in opposition and appropriation—was a driving force in the development of culture and institutions in both of these worlds. Consequently, we now see the Mediterranean—the region where Islam and Christendom not only met but merged—not as a zone of division, but as the epicenter of transformational historical processes that involved European, African and Near

Eastern peoples, including Christians, Muslims and Jews, who together constitute the West.

How did this change come about? However much many of us have long found the ethnocentric perspective to be unscientific and unethical, and as much as the outliers on the reactionary right might suggest otherwise, this revolution in perspective did not come about as some deliberate ideological program imposed by politically correct academicians. It developed organically as a consequence of shifts within the academy and society as a whole. No longer is the academy the preserve of a narrow class of privileged, white middle-class Christian men, or of scholars who imagine it as a self-evident truth that the nation—a supposedly coherent convergence of language, culture, religion and race—is the basic unit of human history. The diversification of the academy, and the Humanities in particular, in terms of gender, social class and ethnic identity from the second half of the twentieth century onwards, and the incorporation of scholars of different backgrounds and perspectives has undermined many of the assumptions that the study of history and culture were based on. No less important has been the diversification of our student bodies and of the educated reading public, who are less and less interested in historical meta-narratives that marginalize or ignore the communities they identify with. The movement towards critical theory and cultural studies from the 1970s forward provided an intellectual articulation of these dissatisfactions and provide scholars with a vocabulary and methodologies to push back against what up to then were considered a priori truths regarding our disciplines.

Within the academy, the Occidentalized curio-cabinet approach to the Humanities that coalesced in the nineteenth century has declined. Whereas previously, historians, art historians and scholars of literature and culture worked in often willing and deliberate disciplinary isolation, interdisciplinarity has been for some time now regarded as an ideal. Again, this is no mere intellectual affectation or scholarly fashion, but a consequence of scholars coming to recognize the insights working across disciplines can bring to their own work. Part of this shift is due to changes in the way that scholars are trained and prepare for the job market. Doctoral students now frequently train in more than one linguistic, cultural or religious tradition, or geographic region or period. This has been driven in part by the increasing sophistication of newer generations of scholars, and in part by the pressure of competing in an ever more demanding job market, and in part by the temptation of university administrators to economize by looking



for single scholars who can cover two areas and, therefore, take the place of two faculty members.

The net result of all of this is that scholars today are less likely to see an academy defined by disciplines or a medieval world divided conceptually between supposedly ontologically superior Christian European civilizations and a marginal and inferior everything else, and are coming to recognize the value of the Mediterranean as a heuristic framework for investigating the history of the larger West, including Europe, North Africa and Western Asia in the Middle Ages.

Thus, in recent years, journals, projects and fora focusing oriented towards or identifying with Mediterranean Studies have proliferated not only in North America and Europe, but also in Asia. *The Mediterranean Seminar*, for example: a forum for promoting collaborative and interdisciplinary research and pedagogy has in 12 years grown to include over 1500 scholarly associates in over 40 countries. The *Spain North Africa Project* (SNAP), which grew out of a summer institute organized by *The Mediterranean Seminar* has itself now become a world-wide community of scholars, and the European Research Council has sponsored a rich portfolio of Mediterranean-oriented research projects, while smaller-scale projects, such as *ArtMedGIS*, are breaking new ground through the use of innovative technological and methodological approaches.

In other words, this is a very exciting moment to be a scholar of the pre-Modern West—a time when new perspectives and methodologies are leading us to reconsider both the history of the Islamic world and Christendom in the Middle Ages and to reappraise our very disciplines and practices.

This volume epitomizes all of these trends in the new Mediterranean-centered Medieval Studies, bringing together in English contributions from both long-established and leading specialists and recently trained and promising new scholars from Spain, the rest of Europe, and beyond. Each of the contributions in its own way bridges the divisions that used to define scholarship—whether by region, period, cultural or religious tradition, or discipline—and by publishing these studies in English, now the academic lingua franca, makes them accessible to scholars everywhere. As such it marks the culmination of trends that have been reshaping academia in the last decades, and provides a model for such endeavors in the future.

## PREFACE

Studies on Islamic religion, society, culture and the arts have been always of considerable interest to scholars in many different fields. The political and economic dependencies and turmoil of the past two decades, however, has led to an increased need for understanding. Throughout the Middle Ages and continuing to today, the Mediterranean Sea has been a complex scenario of relations among different societies. Although most of the times it has been considered a connecting element (above all in the trade context, where most of the coastal capitals were linked by their important ports), other times it has been a significant border area, where an imaginary line (or multiple ones) separates Christian and Islamic societies (let us think, for instance, of the Crusades), or, in more recent times, European and non-European ones (as an example, the flows of migrants from the East and South of the Mediterranean trying to get to Europe). In this way, the Mediterranean becomes a dual element, in which the concepts of union and separation—both physical and ideological—coexist, with the consequent implications in the construction of the identity of the Mediterranean societies. Nevertheless, despite the existing differences, the Mediterranean has been an important means of exchange between Islamic and non-Islamic countries. Numerous research groups focusing on this topic have appeared in the last decade, such as the *Spain-North Africa Project* (SNAP) and *The Mediterranean Seminar*. Furthermore, an increased number of projects focusing on the relations between the East and West, Christendom and Islam or North Africa and al-Andalus, such as the *Qantara* Project (Institut du Monde Arab—El Legado Andalusi

Foundation), the *Europeana* Project or the *ArtMedGIS* Project (all funded by the European Commission throughout its different Framework Programmes), have emerged on the international scene.

The present publication is included within the frame of this latest European Project, with the full title, *Analysis of the Artistic Exchanges in the Medieval Mediterranean between Twelfth and Fifteenth Centuries through the Geographical Information Systems (GIS): A Critical Review of “Centre” and “Peripheries”* (*ArtMedGIS* Project, MSCA—H2020, Grant Agreement no. 699818). It focuses on the period between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, a time characterised by very turbulent and complex relations between the Islamic and Christian worlds that, in fact, shares strong parallels with the current political situation, making of it a relevant period-of-interest. Within the framework of the *ArtMedGIS* Project, two International Workshops on this topic, both entitled *Dialogues in Late Medieval Mediterranean*, were held in 2017. The first one, at the Universidade Nova of Lisbon (Portugal), focused on the legacy of Western Islamic societies; the second one, held at the Alhambra of Granada (Spain), focused on the exchanges between East and West. In both Workshops, a space for dialogue was created in order to share current research results. New collaborative networks were also established by experienced and young researchers alike, thus enabling the development of interdisciplinary research lines across various disciplines, all focused on the late Middle Ages. This framework has made this publication possible.

Set in this context, the aim of this book is to analyse the artistic and cultural legacy of Western Islamic societies and their interactions with the Oriental, Christian and Jewish worlds from various complementary perspectives. For this purpose, contributions from the fields of Art History, Architecture, History, Literature, Archaeology, History of Science, Philosophy and History of Religions have been included in this volume. Although the emphasis is primarily on Art History studies, these multidisciplinary approaches have contributed to draw the broader cultural panorama in which the artistic manifestations addressed herein were developed. Moreover, these non-art history studies have highlighted some fundamental aspects of the culture in question, as relate to religion, propaganda and social matters and which, so considered, allow a more comprehensive understanding of, and approach to, the complex interactions within the Mediterranean basin as unfolded in the late Middle Ages and has helped give rise to those artistic creations, beyond the ideas of hybridity.

According to the territorial and chronological restrictions of the Mediterranean between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, the main fields of study contained in the publication are those referring to the most outstanding Western Islamic societies and, as well, the Eastern ones, which they had some kind of relation with during the late Middle Ages: the Fatimids in Egypt; the Almoravids and Almohads in North Africa and al-Andalus; the Banū Gānīyya in the Balearic Islands; the Zenghids, Ayyubids and Mamluks in Eastern Mediterranean; the Nasrids in Granada and the Christian Kingdoms on the Iberian Peninsula. Works on Mudéjar manifestations and Norman Sicily have been also included, due to their own unique qualities.

The present study of these societies has been approached from a multi-disciplinary perspective, and organised into four main sections. In the first section, under the title *Al-Andalus beyond al-Andalus: the Maghreb and the Masbriq*, the Andalusī legacy is addressed from its presence in the East and the West. In this section, Javier Albarrán shows, through al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s death, how this personality became a symbol related to al-Ghazālī in the East and Ibn Tūmart in the West, and how his *Kitāb al-Shifā’* became a “bestseller” of the Islamic world. In this way, this chapter is closely related to Maribel Fierro’s text, which explores the popularity of works written by the Andalusī scholars, especially those that managed to enjoy success across the Islamic world as a whole (and not only in the territories of al-Andalus and the Maghreb). Both chapters accomplish their ends: to delineate the Mediterranean cultural scenario out of which the artistic productions mentioned in this book developed. At the end of this section, Susana Calvo Capilla travels from Umayyad Cordoba to Mamluk Cairo to show how certain practices in architecture, especially the use of *spolia* and classical materials, are shared by both societies as strategies of legitimacy and self-affirmation.

Concerning the second part of the book, *Andalusī Legacy in Medieval Christian Art*, the relations and transfers between al-Andalus and the artistic productions of the Christian Kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula are analysed. In this way, Inés Monteiro shows how the Muslims are depicted in Mediterranean Romanesque sculpture, with initial visual traits that define the religious otherness in the twelfth century. In the case of the Gothic world, Doron Bauer presents the particular case of the survival of the Islamic past in Palma de Mallorca after 1229, despite the intention of the Christian conquerors to create a new identity reflected in the Gothic style (through portable Islamicate objects that circulated within these

monumental Gothic halls). At the end of this section, Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza analyses the political and religious messages that Castile and Granada shared in the field of the arts and architecture at the end of the Middle Ages and as were embedded in the context of the Mediterranean Islamic art.

The third section of the book, under the title *Andalusi Cultural Legacy in the Iberian Societies*, explores other manifestations of the Andalusi legacy in the fields of knowledge, construction, identity and religious studies. In this way, this section both delimits and enriches the cultural context that surrounded the artistic manifestations in the Western Mediterranean. In this framework, Michael A. Conrad reconstructs the social networks of scholars and patrons between the end of the twelfth century and the end of the thirteenth century to vindicate the importance of Murcia as a centre of Islamic erudition and, as well, transfer of knowledge to the Christian scholars. On the other hand, the movement of culture between Islamic and Christian societies on the Iberian Peninsula, as elaborated in the field of building regulations, is shown by Sandra M. G. Pinto in the second chapter of this section. In this work, Pinto demonstrates the strong influences of the Islamic regulations in the Christian ones, as well as the case of the official responsible for applying these rules. This continuity is also present in the case of the pious endowments, as Ana María Carballeira Debasa explores, in context of the holding of these assets in the Christian administration after the conquest of the Nasrid Granada. In her work, she explains how these pious endowments were assimilated into the new society and the transformations experienced when they were transferred to the Castilian institutions.

Regarding the fourth and last section of this book, *Circulation of Cultural Goods in the Medieval Mediterranean*, here one finds the study of the ornamental transfers and exchanges in the artistic manifestations between East and West, in the specific case of cultural goods, themselves bearers of political and religious ideas as were shared on both sides of the Mediterranean basin. On this topic, Noelia Silva Santa-Cruz studies the iconographic transmissions in the particular case of the painted ivory works of the Norman monarchy in Sicily, which assimilated the propagandistic visual lexicon of the sumptuary productions of al-Andalus and the Fatimid Caliphate. In the case of textile production, Laura Rodríguez Peinado proposes a change in the paradigm in studies about the ornamental repertoire of the Almohad and Nasrid textiles, with an analysis of transfers between these cases and the fabrics produced in the context of the

Eastern Mediterranean. At the end of this section, Azucena Hernández Pérez, from the double perspective of art and science, explores cross-references in the Islamic Mediterranean in the production of astrolabes during the Almohad and Nasrid periods in al-Andalus and under the Ayyubid rule in Syria and Egypt, focusing on the creation of the Universal Astrolabe.

As final remarks and as the framework of this publication, a summary of the *ArtMedGIS* Project is included. This chapter presents its main results (an assessment of the artistic exchanges within the Mediterranean framework between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, as analysed through application of the Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to the study of Art History. The analysis provided by the GIS has enabled the measurement—in a numerical way and from specific cases of study—complex political, religious and cultural phenomena that are analysed throughout this publication by the various authors.

At the end of this book, an index is included to facilitate the consultation through the material.

In another vein, this publication is the result of the effort of a great number of authors from a range of disciplines, countries and Institutions. We would like express our deepest thanks for their enthusiasm, patience and precious contributions. They all have made this book possible.

Málaga, Spain

María Marcos Cobaleda

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the support and funding received for the research that has made possible this publication. This research has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 699818.

On the other hand, the research of some parts of this book was supported by the Anneliese Maier Award 2014 (Alexander von Humboldt Foundation), *Practicing knowledge in Islamic societies and their neighbours* (dir. Maribel Fierro); the Spanish Ministry of Education FFI2016-78878-R AEI/FEDER, EU; the Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte of Spain under the programme “Formación de Profesorado Universitario” (FPU/2015); the Spanish State Plan for Scientific and Technical Research and Innovation “Al-Andalus, art, science and contexts in an open Mediterranean. From the West to Egypt and Syria” (RTI2018-093880-B-I00); the Spanish State Research Agency and the European Union's Regional Development Fund (FEDER, EU); the research project of the Government of Spain “Andalusi textiles fabrics: characterization and interdisciplinary study” (HAR2014-54918-P); and the national funds through the FCT—Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P., under the Norma Transitória—DL 57/2016/CP1453/CT0026. It also had the support of CHAM (NOVA FCSH—UAç), through the strategic projected sponsored by FCT (UID/HIS/04666/2019).

Moreover, I would like to thank the support, advises, patience and availability of the editorial team from Palgrave Macmillan, especially

Megan Laddusaw, Tikoji Rao Mega Rao and Sam Stocker. I want to dedicate a special mention to the people who have made possible this publication. In the first place, I would like to thank to all the contributors for their hard work in sending their texts on time and adapting them to the editorial conventions. Among them, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Noelia Silva Santa-Cruz and Azucena Hernández Pérez for their disposition and adaptation of their contributions. I am sure that the reader will not miss the images in both chapters, given the high quality of the contributors' texts. Last, but not the least, I would like to dedicate a special tribute to our families, for their constant support and patience, which have significantly helped to finish this book.



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PART I

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Al-Andalus Beyond al-Andalus: The  
Maghreb and the Mashriq



## CHAPTER 1

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# From the Islamic West to Cairo: Malikism, Ibn Tūmart, al-Ghazālī and al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s Death

*Javier Albarrán*

The socio-cultural links between the Islamic West and the *Masbriq* were continuous throughout the Middle Ages, and have been studied from varied perspectives, such as the circulation of scholars and travelers or the transmission of knowledge and artistic innovations. The aim of this chapter is to study these relations from another dimension: the production and reproduction of the collective memory and shared symbolic narratives focused on remembrance and emotion, which allow us to analyse and

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This research was supported by the Anneliese Maier Award 2014. Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. *Practicing knowledge in Islamic societies and their neighbours*, dir. Maribel Fierro; and by the *Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte* of Spain under the program “Formación de Profesorado Universitario” (FPU/2015)

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© The Author(s) 2021  
M. Marcos Cobaleda (ed.), *Artistic and Cultural Dialogues in the Late Medieval Mediterranean*, Mediterranean Perspectives,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53366-3\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53366-3_1)

understand the social and cultural phenomena that were developed and how they interacted with each other.

To this end, I will focus on a case study, the creation and transmission of the different narratives on al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s death (d. 1149), which will take us through time and space: from Almoravid Ceuta to Mamluk-Ottoman Cairo, going through Almohad Marrakech, Merinid Maghrib or Nasrid Granada.

Through different reports and narrative genealogies, and the contexts in which they were created and transmitted, I will study how ‘Iyāḍ, author of the *Kitāb al-Shifā’* (Fierro 2011a, p. 19–34; Albarrán 2015), an Islamic world’s bestseller, became a symbol with numerous edges that overlapped with others like al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) or Ibn Tūmart (d. 1130), and how his death became a place of memory linked with many phenomena of different types. *Lieux de mémoire*, a notion created by Pierre Nora (Nora 1989, p. 7–24), are signals and references, such as facts, objects, places or institutions, which represent certain values, symbols of collective interest that become part of the memory. Moreover, they are also disputed episodes, whose memory generates identities, consensus and obligations. That is, they are mediators of memory, through which it is molded and transmitted. They are references that are changed, fashioned and refashioned in different ways in their process of oral and written transmission, which are produced and reproduced because they are meaningful for the collective memory, and therefore they appeared in different ways and versions in the sources, expanded or reduced, with new characters or actions.

In this sense, the figure of ‘Iyāḍ, distilled through his death, experienced processes of appropriation and re-reading from many different angles, just as had happened with his own work, the *Shifā’*. This re-use of ‘Iyāḍ’s memory in different contexts, its remembrance and re-memorialization in various situations, the plural visions towards his figure and work that provoked processes of recontextualization and resignification, have not been studied yet. Therefore, the goal of this chapter is to show how ‘Iyāḍ—through the narration of his death—became a place of memory that was, in addition, common to the entire Mediterranean and to the Islamic world, a collective symbol within this broad context.

Consequently, I also aim to show an example of how the Mediterranean not only served as a vehicle for the mobility of people and transmission of goods and ideas, but also for these collective imaginary and shared memories and emotions, which thus are part of the different kind of relations existing between the various Mediterranean societies. Therefore, ‘Iyāḍ’s

commemoration—understood as a dynamic process where reports from the past are recovered and re-narrated in a given present to serve future aims—became part of the cultural legacy of the Islamic West in the *Mashriq* and the Mediterranean, where it was molded and re-signified.

### 1.1 BRIEF NOTE ON ‘IYĀḌ’S LIFE

‘Iyāḍ b. Mūsā al-Yahṣubī, better known as al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ, was born in 1083 in Ceuta.<sup>1</sup> The following year, the Almoravid leader Yūsuf b. Tāshufīn took the city and used it to gain control of al-Andalus, a territory fragmented in the so-called *Tā’ifa* kingdoms, threatened by the Christian advance.<sup>2</sup> One of the legitimation tools implemented by the Almoravids was the alliance of the Berber dynasty with the Mālikī *fuqahā’*. Following this policy, ‘Iyāḍ was sent in 1113–1114 for a study journey to al-Andalus sponsored by the Almoravid power. In 1121, he was appointed chief *qāḍī* of Ceuta, remaining in this position until 1136, year in which he became judge in Granada. Shortly after, due to a conflict with Tāshufīn b. ‘Alī, the local Almoravid ruler of Granada, ‘Iyāḍ was dismissed from this judicature (Kassis 1988, p. 49–56). He was reappointed as *qāḍī* in Ceuta in 1145 by Ibrāhīm b. Tāshufīn (d. 1147), when the Almohad movement had already begun to challenge the Almoravid dominion of the region.<sup>3</sup> In this sense, ‘Iyāḍ seems to have served as the de facto ruler of Ceuta against the new dynasty.

After a couple of resistance attempts led by the *qāḍī*, ‘Iyāḍ finally decided to surrender the city to the Almohads on May 1146. Nevertheless, and taking advantage of the defeat of the Almohad troops against the *bargawāṭa*, who started a rebellion in Salé and Tanger, and the triumph of Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Hūd al-Māssī, who also rose up in arms against the Almohads in the Sūs, Ceuta, led by ‘Iyāḍ, expelled the Almohad power. In that same year, a dinar featuring a clearly anti-Almohad legend was minted in the city (Kassis 1983, p. 505–14; Fierro 2006, p. 457–76).

<sup>1</sup> On ‘Iyāḍ’s life, see, for example, Hermosilla (1978–1979, p. 149–64), al-Tāzī (1980, p. 472–87), Hermosilla (1981, p. 309–25), Serrano (2004–2012, p. 404–34), Gómez-Rivas (2013, p. 323–38) and Albarrán (2015, 39 and ff).

<sup>2</sup> On the Almoravids, see, for example, Bosch (1956), Lagardère (1989), Viguera (1997, p. 41–64), Lagardère (1998), Messier (2010), Gómez-Rivas (2014), Bennison (2016) and Marcos Cobaleda (2018).

<sup>3</sup> On the Almohads see, for example, Huici Miranda (1957), Cressier et al. (2005), Fromherz (2010), Fierro (2012), Ghouirgate (2014) and Bennison (2016).

But, in spite of the efforts of the *qādī* and his allies, in May 1148 the Unitarian caliph's troops conquered again the city. 'Abd al-Mu'min forgave 'Iyād's life, but he was dispossessed of his judicial office and forced to leave his native city without his family. He was eventually ordered to reside in Marrakech, where he died, and his remains were buried near Bāb Aylān.

'Iyād's intellectual production is vast and varied (Serrano 2004–2012, p. 404–34), ranging from *ḥadīth* to poetry, through *fiqh*, theology, history and *adab*, but he is best known throughout the Islamic world for his work in praise of the Prophet, the *Kitāb al-Shifā'*, and for his history of the Mālikī *madhhab* entitled *Tarīḥ al-madārik*, a biographical dictionary with more than 1500 entries on followers of the Mālikī school. This work led 'Iyād to become a model of fidelity to his legal school. With this dictionary, 'Iyād carried out the most complete and elaborate theoretical defence of Malikism ever known, a true monument to the glory of the *fuqahā'* of this *madhhab* that turned the *qādī* himself into a symbol of Malikism.

## 1.2 NARRATING AL-QĀDĪ 'IYĀD'S DEATH

To begin with, I will briefly review, in chronological order, the accounts of the *qādī*'s death that were transmitted in the Middle Ages (see Fig. 1.1).

The first is that of his son, Muḥammad b. 'Iyād (d. 1179), in the work about his father entitled *al-Ta'rif bi-l-qādī 'Iyād* (Ibn 'Iyād 1994, p. 12–13).<sup>4</sup> He mentions how, before the city of Ceuta fell into the hands of the Almohads, 'Iyād took over his government. He was then transferred to the Almohad capital, Marrakech, where he remained under surveillance until he reconciled with the caliph. According to his son, 'Iyād's rank within the court and with the sultan gradually improved, getting even to participate in some campaigns next to 'Abd al-Mu'mīn. In one of these expeditions he fell ill and returned to Marrakech, where he died at midnight on Friday 9th of Jumādā II of 544/14 October 1149. He was then buried in Bāb Aylān, inside the city walls. Scholars do not give much credit to this report, given that writing from the Almohad period and constructing this reconciliation between the *qādī* and the caliph, Muḥammad b. 'Iyād could be trying to rescue his father's memory, as well as his own situation with the ruling dynasty (Hermosilla 1978–1979, p. 149–64; Ferhat

<sup>4</sup> On Muḥammad b. 'Iyād see Ibn 'Iyād (1998, p. 21 and ff).



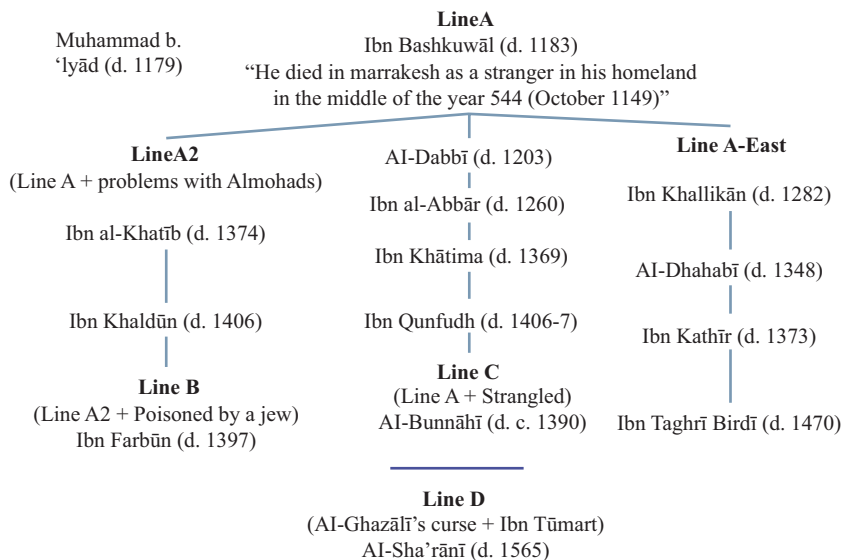


Fig. 1.1 ‘Iyād’s death narrative lines

1993, p. 155; Serrano 2004–2012, p. 404–34; Gómez-Rivas 2013, p. 323–38).

The second account of ‘Iyād’s death is reported in the *Kitāb al-Šila* by Ibn Bashkuwāl (d. 1183), an author who also wrote in the Almohad period. In it no political incident is mentioned and it is simply stated that

he died in Marrakech as a stranger in his homeland (*mugharrab<sup>an</sup> ‘an waṭānīhi*) in the middle of the year 544 (October 1149). (Ibn Bashkuwāl 2014, p. II 52–53)

From that *mugharrab<sup>an</sup> ‘an waṭānīhi* it is implied that he was exiled in the Almohad capital. This more or less aseptic report is the one that has set the pattern of truthfulness for contemporary scholars (Serrano 2004–2012, p. 404–34; Gómez-Rivas 2013, p. 323–38). This narrative line, that from now on I will call *Line A*, is followed by authors such as al-Ḍabbī (d. 1203) and Ibn al-Abbār (d. 1260) (al-Ḍabbī 1989, p. II 572; Ibn al-Abbār

1885, p. 294–98),<sup>5</sup> who are also close to the Almohad influence and who only develop or erase minor details without discursive importance. Later authors like Ibn Qunfudh (d. 1406–07) will also follow this narrative literally (Ibn Qunfudh 1983, p. 280),<sup>6</sup> specifically through Ibn al-Abbār. This *Line A* also has its literal transmission in the East, where authors like Ibn Khallikān (d. 1282), al-Dhahabī (d. 1348), Ibn Kathīr (d. 1373) or Ibn Taghrī Birdī (d. 1470) established what I will call *Line A-East* (Ibn Khallikān 1978, p. III 483–85; al-Dhahabī 1956–1958, p. IV 1304–07; Ibn Kathīr 1998, p. XVI 352; Ibn Taghrī Birdī 1963–1972, p. V 285–86).<sup>7</sup>

There is another branch of *Line A* in the Islamic West, which I will call *Line A2*, where no modifications are observed either. It is already outside the Almohad influence, so it details ‘Iyāḍ’s political problems with the Almohads without referring to any kind of reconciliation. Ibn al-Khaṭīb (d. 1374) and Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406), for example, belong to this narrative line (Ibn al-Khaṭīb 2009, p. V 150–68; Ibn Khaldūn 2000, p. VI 307).<sup>8</sup> The latter mistakenly situated the *qāḍī’s* death as taking place while he was in exile in Tadla, rather than in Marrakech, a village where ‘Iyāḍ probably spent some time before arriving at the Almohad capital (Gómez-Rivas 2013, p. 323–38).

*Line A2* is also followed, a priori, by Ibn Farḥūn (d. 1397), whose biography on ‘Iyāḍ, included in his work *al-Dībāj*, followed Ibn al-Khaṭīb and mentions the problems that existed between the *qāḍī* and the Almohads, saying that he died exiled in Marrakech (Ibn Farḥūn 1972, p. II 46–51).<sup>9</sup> However, later on, when mentioning the date of death and the place of burial, he states that ‘Iyāḍ died poisoned by a Jew, a report for which he does not mention any source and which constitutes what I will call *Line B*.

A similar modification is introduced by al-Bunnāhī (d. 1390) in his *al-Marqaba al-‘Ulyā* (al-Bunnāhī 1983, p. 101).<sup>10</sup> In ‘Iyāḍ’s biography, the reports about his death follow *Line A*, being a literal copy of Ibn Bashkuwāl. However, in the biography of another judge, Abū al-Walīd al-Bājjī

<sup>5</sup> On al-Dabbī, see Álvarez Millán (2004–2012, p. 304–07). On Ibn al-Abbār, see Lirola (2004–2012b, p. 535–63).

<sup>6</sup> On Ibn Qunfudh, see Hadj-Sadok (2014, p. 843–44).

<sup>7</sup> On Ibn Khallikān, see Fück (2012). On al-Dhahabī, see Ben Cheneb and Somogyi (2012). On Ibn Kathīr, see Vadet (2012).

<sup>8</sup> On Ibn al-Khaṭīb, see Lirola (2004–2012a, p. 643–98). On Ibn Khaldūn, see Manzano (2004–2012, p. 578–97), Fromherz (2011) and Irwin (2018).

<sup>9</sup> On Ibn Farḥūn, see Aragón Huerta (2004–2012, p. 141–49).

<sup>10</sup> On al-Bunnāhī, see Calero (2004–2012, p. 282–86).

(d. 1080), he mentions that both ‘Iyād and Abū Bakr b. al-‘Arabī (d. 1148) died violently after being involved in power struggles. He claims that the first was strangled and that Ibn al-‘Arabī was poisoned (al-Bunnāhī 1983, p. 95). I will return to this narrative, which later on I will call *Line C*.

Finally, there is a last narrative line, *Line D*, which is created, or at least reflected, in the East. This line began with the Egyptian al-Sha‘rānī (d. 1565) in his *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* (al-Sha‘rānī 2005, p. I 34),<sup>11</sup> where he mentions that ‘Iyād died suddenly in a *ḥammām* due to a curse sent by al-Ghazālī. Previously, he had pointed out that the *qāḍī* had participated in the public condemnation of the works of the Persian master as well as in their burning. He also included another account according to which ‘Iyād was condemned to death by the founder of the Almohads, Ibn Tūmart, who accused him of crypto-Judaism, alleging that he spent all Saturdays at home writing, supposedly, the *Kitāb al-Shifā’*. Much later on, the Indian author al-Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (d. 1790) quoted al-Sha‘rānī in his commentary on al-Ghazālī’s *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn* and transmitted the same report (al-Zabīdī 1893–1894, p. I 27).<sup>12</sup>

I will now focus on the three narrative lines which include important modifications to the standard report of ‘Iyād’s death appearing on *Line A*, which are lines *B*, *C* and *D*, represented by Ibn Farḥūn, al-Bunnāhī and al-Sha‘rānī/al-Zabīdī, respectively. I will explain why they include such modifications and how they instrumentalize the remembrance of ‘Iyād’s death, keeping in mind that—as a place of memory—it was disputed and meaningful for the audience and, therefore, its modification was going to create cohesion within diverse groups, as well as different emotions.

### 1.3 LINE B. IBN FARḤŪN, THE MĀLIKĪ *MADHḤAB* AND ‘IYĀD’S DEATH POISONED BY A JEW

Born in Medina, Ibn Farḥūn was member of a family of Andalusī origin. A convinced Mālikī, as a judge he tried to revive this legal school in the East, where it was clearly in decline (Aragón Huerta 2004–2012, p. 141–49). With this objective, among other things, in 1360 he wrote a *ṭabaqāt mālikīyya*, a Mālikī biographical dictionary, *al-Dībāj al-mudhahhab fī ma‘rifat a‘yān ‘ulamā’ al-madhhab*, where biographies of Mālikī Andalusīs are half of the total (315/620) (Ibn Farḥūn 1972; Felipe and Rodríguez

<sup>11</sup> On al-Sha‘rānī, see Winter (1982).

<sup>12</sup> On al-Zabīdī, see Reichmuth (2009).

1988, p. 419–527). Without any doubt, ‘Iyād’s *Tartīb al-madārik* was the main source for *al-Dībāj* (Felipe and Rodríguez 1989, p. 211–45). Furthermore, *al-Dībāj’s muqaddima* includes an apology of the *madhhab* and a detailed biography of its founder, Mālik b. Anas. I believe that his account on ‘Iyād’s death must be understood from Ibn Farḥūn’s position as a historian of Malikism and as a fervent defender of this school of law.

In his account on ‘Iyād’s death, Ibn Farḥūn reports how the *qāḍī* had fallen out of grace (*talāshat ḥala-hu*) following the conquest of Ceuta by the Almohads, and how he had ended up dying in Marrakech as an outcast man in his own homeland (*musharrad<sup>mn</sup> bi-hi ‘an waṭani-hi*). Then, he mentions the date of death (the month of Jumādā II of the year 544, October 1149) and adds that some people claimed how he died poisoned by a Jew (*wa-qīl inna-hu māta masmūm<sup>mn</sup>, samma-hu yabūḍī*), although no source is provided for this new information:

After the appearance of the Almohad rulership, he began the procedure to enter into their obedience, and travelled to meet their emir to the city of Salé, being generous in their relationship and arranged in his justice until the power of the Almohads was afflicted in the year 543. After the power returned to the Almohads, and his situation [that of the *qāḍī*] degraded, he ended up in Marrakech as an outcast man in his homeland, and died there [...] And he died in Marrakech in the month of Jumādā II in the year 544, although some say that his death was in the month of Ramaḍān. They say that he died poisoned by a Jew. He was buried in Bab Aylān, inside the city. (Ibn Farḥūn 1972, p. II 46–51)

That is to say, Ibn Farḥūn was turning ‘Iyād into a martyr following the same pattern that some authors had used to make the Prophet Muḥammad a martyr, affirming that he was poisoned by a Jewish woman, Zaynab bt. al-Ḥārith, in Khaybar (628).<sup>13</sup> Already Ibn Ishāq/Ibn Hishām, immediately after Muḥammad’s attempted poisoning, adds a tradition stating that at the time of the illness which eventually led to his death four years later, the Prophet remarked how he had begun to “feel a deadly pain” since such attempted poisoning:

<sup>13</sup>As Kecia Ali states, “Jewish culpability in the poisoning shifted in early Muslim biographical sources from individual responsibility to a small group of culprits to a collective guilt, reflecting an increased anti-Jewish sentiment occasioned by polemical exchanges in the eighth and ninth centuries (Ali 2014, p. 249 note 64).” On the Jews as prophets killers see Reynolds (2012, p. 9–34).

‘Oh Umm Bishr, this is the time in which I feel a deadly pain from what I ate with your brother at Khaybar’. The Muslims considered that the apostle died as a martyr in addition to the prophetic office with which God had honored him. (Ibn Ishāq/Ibn Hishām 1955, p. 516)<sup>14</sup>

As stated in this report, dying as a martyr was considered an additional blessing by God. By turning ‘Iyāḍ into a martyr, Ibn Farḥūn presented a believer who chose suffering or death in order to demonstrate an absolute commitment to a cause (Cook 2007).<sup>15</sup> Ibn Farḥūn thus makes ‘Iyāḍ a symbol of Malikism and of the struggle of this *madhab* for its own survival. Thus, the author of the *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, one of the most famous books on the Prophet, died just like Muḥammad.

Moreover, the martyr’s role is most helpful when the particular belief system is under attack. And this is exactly what happened at the time of ‘Iyāḍ’s death. The *qāḍī* had been characterized by fighting against a movement, the Almohad, which threatened the power that the Mālikī *fuqahā’* had in the Islamic West (Fierro 1997, p. 437–546, 2000a, p. 131–65).<sup>16</sup> This can be seen clearly not only in his resistance to the Almohad caliph in Ceuta, but also in his works, particularly in the chapter on the infallibility (*‘isma*) of the Prophet included in his *Kitāb al-Shifā’* (Madelung and Tyan 2012), a chapter that can be read as a reaction to the alleged infallibility of the *mahdī* Ibn Tūmart (‘Iyāḍ 2013, p. 591 and ff.).<sup>17</sup> ‘Iyāḍ, differing in this issue from the Ash‘arite school—which he followed in all the other theological themes, particularly through al-Bāqillānī (d. 1013)—defended the complete infallibility of the Prophet, even before he received the prophecy. The prophets, therefore, were the only infallible ones, and their infallibility was absolute.

Ibn Farḥūn thus participated in two phenomena which had already begun to take shape in the Islamic West some decades earlier: the sanctification of ‘Iyāḍ and the denouncement and impairment of the memory of

<sup>14</sup> See also Lecker (1992, p. 561–70), Kohlberg (2000, p. 165–95), Shoemaker (2012, p. 301–02), Kohlberg (2012, p. 77–86), Ali (2014, p. 22) and Ouadi (2016, p. 166 and ff).

<sup>15</sup> In Shī ‘a sacred history, for example, the martyrdom of the *imām* becomes a fundamental milestone in his canonization process (Pierce 2013, p. 222 and ff.). See also Kohlberg (2012, p. 77–86) and Pierce (2016).

<sup>16</sup> In Ceuta, ‘Iyāḍ’s city, Ibn Zarqūn wrote an anti-Zāhiri book with clear anti-Almohad implications, and in 1232 the Unitarian authority was rejected by the local council (Ferhat 1993, p. 282 and ff.).

<sup>17</sup> On this issue, see Albarrán (2015, p. 152 and ff).

the Almohads, especially on the part of the pro-Mālikī dynasties who came after the fall of the Almohad power. This *damnatio memoriae* dates back to the middle of the thirteenth century, when the Merinids destroyed the tombs of the Almohad sovereigns in Tīnmal (Ibn ‘Idhārī 2009, p. IV 305–06), thus erasing a location that had constituted a real dynastic “place of memory” throughout the whole Almohad period.<sup>18</sup> Numerous legends that depicted Ibn Tūmart as a falsifier and liar and as a cruel assassin also appeared in sources not only of the Merinid circle, but also, for example, in some Eastern ones (Huici Miranda 1957, p. II 595 and ff.).

At the same time, and in the same milieu, the sanctification of al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ was taking place, especially following the reception of his *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, a work that from its outset became a point of reference among works on veneration of the Prophet. The immense number of manuscripts of this work that have been preserved, more than two hundred, illustrates its enormous diffusion and tremendous success.<sup>19</sup>

Likewise, the *Shifā’* was used as a source for many texts of different nature. For example, it is found as a basis in other works about the Prophet such as *al-Mawāhid al-laduniyya* by al-Qaṣṭallānī (d. 1517) (Schimmel 1985, p. 33); it is also quoted in works of inter-religious polemics like the *Tuhfā*—an anti-Christian work by the Muslim convert Anselm Turmeda (d. 1423)—where it is significantly called *Kitāb ḥujjat al-Islām* (“Book of the proofs of Islam”) (Epalza 1971, p. 486), and also in others of intra-religious polemics as the refutation to Ibn ‘Arabī, entitled *Kashf al-ghitā’*, by the jurist al-Yamānī (d. 1451) (Serrano 2004–2012, p. 404–34). A large number of commentaries on the work were also written, such as, for example, the one by Ibn Marzūq, a Merinid scholar (d. 1379) (Albarrán 2015, p. 100 and ff.).

In this sense, the Merinids built ‘Iyāḍ’s *qubba*, his burial monument, in Marrakech, thus distancing again themselves from the Almohads, and it is known that Sultan Abū-l-Ḥasan (d. 1351), a ruler closely linked with Ibn Marzūq, visited it on several occasions (Castries 1924, p. 245–303; Serrano 2004–2012, p. 404–34). Moreover, Sultan Abū ‘Inān (d. 1358) constituted as a *waqf* for the great mosque of Taza a manuscript of the *Shifā’*

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, the visits of the different Almohad caliphs to these tombs reported in the sources (Ibn Simāk 1979, p. 168; ‘Abd al-Wāḥid al-Marrākushī 2005, p. 224–25).

<sup>19</sup> On this issue, see also the European Project “Making Books Talk: The Material Evidence of Manuscripts of the *Kitāb al-Shifā’* by Qadī Iyad (d.1149) for the Reception of an Andalusian Biography of the Prophet between 1100 and 1900” (Mashqi), led by Dr. Dagmar Riedel.

(Erzini 2014, p. 498-99). Later on, already in Alawite times, ‘Iyāḍ was chosen as one of the seven patrons of Marrakech, and the *Shifā*’ as one of the mandatory books to study in the important madrasa of al-Qarawiyyīn in Fez by Sultan Mulay Rashīd (d. 1672) (Castries 1924, p. 245–303). Of course, al-Maqqarī’s work on ‘Iyāḍ, *Azhār al-riyāḍ fī akhbār ‘Iyāḍ*, was also part of this phenomenon.

Thus, through the reconstruction and rewriting of the memory of ‘Iyāḍ’s death and his transformation into a martyr, Ibn Farḥūn participated in the sanctification of the *qāḍī* that was taking place in Mālikī environments (though not only in Mālikī ones) and turn ‘Iyāḍ into a symbol of Malikism to be claimed in his aim to revitalize this *madhhab* in the East. At the same time, it also contributed to the process of denouncing the memory and remembrance of the Almohads, a dynasty that was, at least in some phases, anti-Mālikī.

#### 1.4 LINE C. AL-BUNNĀHĪ AND THE STRANGULATION OF AL-QĀḌĪ ‘IYĀḌ

Al-Bunnāhī (d. 1390) was a very closed scholar to the court of the Nasrid emir Muḥammad V, where he was named *kātib*. Among the works he studied in his training process as an *‘ālim*, was ‘Iyāḍ’s *Shifā*’. He also became the supreme *qāḍī* of Granada and the preacher of its great mosque (Calero 1999, p. 53–76, 2004–2012, p. 282–86). In his *al-Marqaba al-‘Ulyā*, a work on the institution of judicature, which includes biographies of different *quḍāt*, he reports an account about ‘Iyāḍ’s death in the entry dedicated to the *fuqih* that closely follows *Line A*, particularly Ibn Bashkuwāl’s version:

And he died in Marrakech as a stranger in his homeland in the middle of the year 544 (October 1149). (al-Bunnāhī 1983, p. 101)

Therefore, he does not mention anything about ‘Iyāḍ’s problematic relationship with the Almohads. However, in the biography dedicated to the *qāḍī* Abū al-Walīd al-Bājī (d. 1080) (Fierro 2004–2012, p. 233–43), he points out, as an example of people who, like al-Bājī himself, have been remembered (al-Bunnāhī 1983, p. 95), that Abū Bakr b. al-‘Arabī (d.

1148)<sup>20</sup> and al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ, both involved in various power struggles, died in a violent way—while the first was poisoned, the second was strangled:

They suffered afflictions (*miḥan*) and were beaten by sectarian struggles (*fiṭan*). They both died as strangers in their homelands (*mugharrīb<sup>an</sup> ‘an waṭani-hi*), bound by their sultan (*maḥmūl<sup>an</sup> ‘alay-hi min sulṭāni-hi*). And some people say: Ibn al-‘Arabī died poisoned and al-Yaḥṣubī” (‘Iyāḍ) strangled. (al-Bunnāhī 1983, p. 95)

While it is true that the poisoning of Abū Bakr b. al-‘Arabī appears in other sources and it is possible that it happened (Lagardère 1985, p. 91–102; Cano Ávila et al. 2004–2012, p. 129–58), the report about ‘Iyāḍ’s death by strangulation is totally new and al-Bunnāhī does not mention where he took it from. On the other hand, it is also true that both *quḍāt* were involved in power struggles: like ‘Iyāḍ Abū Bakr b. al-‘Arabī also had problems with the Almohads. Being a *qāḍī* in Seville very close to the Almoravids when the Almohads conquered the city, Ibn al-‘Arabī was sent to Marrakech and imprisoned during a year. He died near Fez, on his way back to Seville.

Why did al-Bunnāhī decide to include the report of ‘Iyāḍ’s strangulation in his biography of al-Bāji alongside the account on Abū Bakr b. al-‘Arabī’s poisoning, both stories told in a context of power struggles? It seems that he was using the memory of these three great scholars, all of them undoubtedly belonging to the Mālikī Andalusī pantheon, to praise the ‘*ulamā*’ and *fuqahā*’ elite, to which he himself belonged, and to which his *al-Marqaba al-‘Ulyā* was principally directed. Al-Bunnāhī states that the three of them belonged to the group of those wise men who are and will be remembered over time due to their knowledge and deeds. Their memory was going to prevail, whether they were very close to the power, as is the case of al-Bāji, whom he calls *ṣāhib al-ru’asā*, and of whom he says that he was criticized in his time because of this—he might well be paralleling his own figure and his own relationship with the Nasrids—or whether they were involved in struggles against the established power and had died for it, as did Abū Bakr b. al-‘Arabī and ‘Iyāḍ (al-Bunnāhī 1983, p. 95). Al-Bunnāhī, thus defending his own status as *‘ālim* and *faqīh* and perhaps also defending himself against those who could accuse him of

<sup>20</sup>On Abū Bakr b. al-‘Arabī, see Lagardère (1985, p. 91–102) and Cano Ávila et al. (2004–2012, p. 129–58).



being too close to the Nasrid power, made it clear that the *‘ulamā’*, inheritors of the Prophet and central axis of the Muslim community, were above the circumstances of power (al-Tirmidhī 2007, n. 3682; Albarrán 2015, p. 27 and ff.). It was their knowledge that would preserve their memory, not their relationship with the sultan.

Moreover, it must be remembered that when al-Bunnāhī wrote this work, the conflict that ended with the execution of Ibn al-Khaṭīb in Fez was either taking place, or was already over.<sup>21</sup> Al-Bunnāhī, member of the accusatory party in this case, could have been criticized for positioning himself on the side of Nasrid power and not on that of his former friend Ibn al-Khaṭīb, who was finally strangled, like ‘Iyāḍ in al-Bunnāhī’s report. Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s accusation and subsequent trial on religious grounds were no more than excuses intended to bring about his death, which had more to do with problems of a political nature. He was accused of crimes against religion (especially *zandaqa*) as this was the only sure way of building a successful case against him (Calero and Roser 2001, p. 421–61).<sup>22</sup> Additionally, this report about al-Bājī, Abū Bakr b. al-‘Arabī and ‘Iyāḍ could also be a reflection on what might or not occur with the memory of Ibn al-Khaṭīb. That is, beyond his relation to power, he will be remembered or not for his knowledge.

Another alternative reading to this narrative line refers again to the conflict between al-Bunnāhī and Ibn al-Khaṭīb. The scandal that led to Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s flight to the Maghrib in November 1371 reached al-Bunnāhī: he was a main actor of this issue since he was Granada’s supreme *qāḍī* and he was ordered to instruct the trial against the former vizier. One of his first steps was to send him a harsh letter in which he exposed the accusations that were weighing on him. Although they had been good friends, from that moment on, the hatred between them increased, as can be seen in some of Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s works, where he claims that he had composed a satirical booklet against al-Bunnāhī. Finally, Ibn al-Khaṭīb was arrested by the Merinid sultan and his properties were destroyed by an “angry mob” sent by the Nasrid emir. Shortly after, a

<sup>21</sup> As indicated at the end of the work, *al-Marqaba al-‘Ulyā* was written after the burning of the books of Ibn al-Khaṭīb in Granada in 1372, so it may have been written after the death of Ibn al-Khaṭīb himself, which occurred in 1374 (al-Bunnāhī 1983, p. 202). On the trial against Ibn al-Khaṭīb, see Calero and Roser (2001, p. 421–61).

<sup>22</sup> On heresy in the Islamic world, see Lewis (1953, p. 43–64), Fierro (1987), Calder (2000, p. 66–86), Wilson (2007, p. 169–94), Langer and Simon (2008, p. 273–88) and Blois (2012).

*fatwā* was issued and he was sentenced to death for heresy. He died strangled in his cell probably in the autumn of 1374, being unclear if by order of the Merinids or the Nasrids (Calero and Roser 2001, p. 421–61; Calero 2004–2012, p. 282–86; Lirola 2004–2012a, p. 643–98). It seems that the parallelism between the contexts of power struggles and the death by strangulation of ‘Iyād and Ibn al-Khaṭīb is not unintentional. Al-Bunnāhī, through a new reconstruction and rewriting of the memory of ‘Iyād’s death, could legitimize and justify the sad fate of Ibn al-Khaṭīb, arguing that anyone who was involved in struggles against the established power could end up executed, even great personalities like Abū Bakr b. al-‘Arabī or al-Qāḍī ‘Iyād.

### 1.5 LINE D. ‘IYĀD, AL-GHAZĀLĪ AND IBN TŪMART

The last of the narrative lines that I am going to analyse is the one initiated by the Egyptian ‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. Aḥmad al-Sha‘rānī (m. 1565) and that I have called *Line D*. Both a Sufi and a historian of Sufism, he represents the “orthodox and moderate” Sufi branch. One of his ancestors, Mūsā Abū ‘Imrān, was a Maghribi and a follower of Abū Madyan (m. 1198),<sup>23</sup> one of the predecessors of the *ṭarīqa* Shādhiliyya,<sup>24</sup> and it was he who sent him to Egypt (Winter 1982, p. 42 and ff.). Al-Sha‘rānī, as a historian of Sufism, argued in his *Lawāqib al-anwār al-qudsiyya fi manāqib al-‘ulamā’ wa-l-ṣūfiyya*, also known as *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, that genuine Sufis had never gone against Islamic law, and that if this had been interpreted it is because they had been misunderstood. That is, it represents the fusion between Sufism and *sharī‘a*.

In this work, a compendium of Sufi biographies, he mentions that ‘Iyād, who had condemned al-Ghazālī and his works (Eggen 2018, p. 87–109),<sup>25</sup> died suddenly in a *ḥammām* when the Persian master cursed him. He also adds another story according to which Ibn Tūmart would have ordered the death of the *qāḍī*, accused of crypto-Judaism, since he stayed all Saturdays at his house, claiming that he was writing the *Shifā’*:

<sup>23</sup> On Abū Madyan see, for example, Cornell (1996).

<sup>24</sup> He was the spiritual guide of ‘Abd al-Salām b. Mashīsh (d. 1227), who in turn was one of Abū-l-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī (d. 1258) masters.

<sup>25</sup> On the condemnation of al-Ghazālī’s ideas see Rubio (1956, p. 90–111), Fierro (1999, p. 174–206), Serrano (2006, p. 137–56), Garden (2010, p. 89–197; 2014, p. 149 and ff), Safran (2014, p. 148–68), Bennisson (2016, p. 242) and Casewit (2017, p. 50–56).

Among the group that condemned al-Ghazālī and issued a *fatwā* about burning his book were al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ and Ibn Rushd. When al-Ghazālī knew about this, he cursed the *qāḍī*, who died suddenly in his *ḥammām* the same day. It has been said that al-Mahdī (Ibn Tūmart) was the one who ordered that he (‘Iyāḍ) should be killed after people in his town accused him of being a Jew because he did not out on Saturdays because he was busy working on the *Shifā’*. However, it was because of al-Ghazālī’s curse that al-Mahdī killed him. (al-Sha‘rānī 2005, p. I 34)<sup>26</sup>

If this report is considered as a historical account, there are obvious chronological discrepancies: al-Ghazālī died in 1111, Ibn Tūmart in 1130 and ‘Iyāḍ in 1149. But al-Sha‘rānī was not a historian; he was above all a defender of Sufism. For him, “people and events per se had little meaning. They became significant only when they could teach a religious or moral lesson (Winter 1982, p. 73).” It is possible that this narrative and memory line inaugurated by al-Sha‘rānī, Sufi and defender of the compatibility of the mystical way with the Islamic law, was modifying and using ‘Iyāḍ’s death to revile the memory of those who had attacked Sufism and had claimed its incompatibility with the *sharī‘a*, in this case through the conflict of ‘Iyāḍ—and other *fuqahā’* of the Islamic West—with al-Ghazālī.

Moreover, the Mālikī *madhhab* was second in influence in al-Sha‘rānī’s Mamluk-Ottoman Egypt, and there were clearly tensions between Mālikīs, often traditionalistic Maghribis, and scholars affiliated with other *madhāhib*. According to Michael Winter, in the collective consciousness of most Egyptian and North African Sufis, the enemy was personified in the figure of the Mālikī *fuqāh*. The history of Sufism in Egypt in the late Middle Ages is closely linked to that of North Africa and is full of incidents in which Mālikī jurists attacked Sufis. For example, one of the fiercest attacks on popular religion in Egypt came from the Mālikī *fuqāh* Ibn al-Ḥājj (Winter 1982, p. 223 and ff). Thus, al-Sha‘rānī participates in the reproduction of these memories through retelling incidents where Mālikīs attacked Sufis. Al-Ghazālī’s book burning by Andalusī and Maghribī Mālikī *fuqahā’* was an example.

Let us briefly see what happened between ‘Iyāḍ and al-Ghazālī’s works (Serrano 2004–2012, p. 404–34). The attitude of Muḥammad b. ‘Iyāḍ about his father’s relationship with Sufism seems to indicate that indeed

<sup>26</sup> On this issue, see also Ferhat (1993, p. 146–56), Gómez-Rivas (2013, p. 323–38; 2014, p. 119) and Eggen (2018, p. 87–109).

the *qāḍī* could have issued a public condemnation of al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* in 1143. However, Nora Eggen has recently stated that,

until further historical sources potentially may shed some more light on the issue, 'Iyāḍ's alleged role in condemning, outlawing or burning al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā'* must be understood as a mix-up of historical facts, anecdotes and overly interpretative assumptions. (Eggen 2018, p. 87–109)

Regardless of whether or not 'Iyāḍ ordered the *Iḥyā'* to be burned,<sup>27</sup> the important point is that he could be seen as a representative of those *Mālikī fuqahā'* who attacked al-Ghazālī.

Muḥammad b. 'Iyāḍ claims that his father wanted to clean his image as a strong opponent against Sufism by “referring accounts about Sufis and his doctrines.” Later, implying that his father's position regarding al-Ghazālī was moderate rather than condemning the whole work, he relates that his father told his teacher Abū Muḥammad b. Maṣṣūr in 1119 that if al-Ghazālī's *Revival* was summarized and freed from the errors that it contained, it would be a very useful work. His teacher replied that it was 'Iyāḍ himself who had to summarize it, since there was no one in the whole country more appropriate to do so (Ibn 'Iyāḍ 1994, p. 5, 106–07; Serrano 2004–2012, p. 404–34). Moreover, as Muḥammad b. 'Iyāḍ does not deny that his father took part in al-Ghazālī's condemnation, this could indicate that he did.

Besides, little is known about the thoughts that 'Iyāḍ found condemnable in the *Iḥyā'*. It is known that the *qāḍī* was aware of the contents of the letters that his master Ibn Ḥamdīn (d. 1114) wrote refuting al-Ghazālī. It is also known that two other teachers of 'Iyāḍ, Abū Bakr b. al-'Arabī and Ibn Rusḥd al-Jadd, were also opposed to certain doctrines of al-Ghazālī. What really worried both '*ulamā'* was the theory of God's knowledge and its relationship with the hierarchy of religious authorities—a theory which if misunderstood could lead the Sufis to reach a degree of religious authority close to that of the Prophet. And this belief could give wings to those who were interested in questioning the religious legitimacy of the established political power and of the *fuqahā'* themselves (Serrano 2006, p. 137–56; Albarrán 2015, p. 73 and ff.). On the other hand, in the

<sup>27</sup>Although he does not talk about his death, the Hanbali Ibn al-'Imād (d. 1679) also states that 'Iyāḍ ordered the burning of al-Ghazālī's books (Ibn al-'Imād 1986, p. VI 226–27). On Ibn al-'Imād see Rosenthal (2012).

introduction to the *Tarīḥ al-madārik*, ‘Iyāḍ names al-Ghazālī among the jurists who accused Mālikīs—unjustly according to him—of placing the consensus of Medina before the universal consensus of the *Umma* (Brunschvig 1950, p. 377–435). It seems that what could have troubled ‘Iyāḍ was that, through certain issues stated in al-Ghazālī’s work, the Sufis could supplant the Mālikī ‘*ulamā*’ and *fuqahā*’ as the religious authority in the Islamic West (Albarrán 2015, p. 73 and ff.).

This is a concern that is also seen in the *Shifā*’ through the question of whether or not the Prophet could forget his knowledge, a matter in which ‘Iyāḍ directly criticizes the Sufis (‘Iyāḍ 2013, p. 627).<sup>28</sup> In spite of the total impeccability of the Prophet defended by ‘Iyāḍ, the *Shifā*’ states that Muḥammad could forget about his actions and sayings. The *qāḍī* does not believe this contradicts the miracle of infallibility or weaken the prophecy. To illustrate this statement, he quoted a *ḥadīth*:

The Prophet said: ‘Truly, I am a human being who forgets as you forget, so if I forget, make me remember.’ (‘Iyāḍ 2013, p. 627)

For ‘Iyāḍ, the Prophet’s oblivion (*al-nisyan*) happened for the benefit of the gathering of knowledge and the establishment of the law (*sabab ifādat ‘ilm wa-taqrīr shar‘*), as stated—says the *qāḍī*—in the following *ḥadīth* quoted in the *Shifā*’:

The Prophet said: ‘I forget, or I am made to forget, to legislate.’ (‘Iyāḍ 2013, p. 627)

Therefore—‘Iyāḍ argues—the fact that Muḥammad could forget increases the convenience of collecting information on religious issues. In other words, ‘Iyāḍ defended in this passage the necessity—created by God himself—of the legacy of the ‘*ulamā*’ and the *fuqahā*’ as transmitters of religious knowledge to save—from the outset—all these teachings from oblivion. This issue was a direct criticism to Sufis, since according to the *Shifā*’ there was a sect (*ṭā’ifa*) that defended the Prophet’s inability to forget. It was what the *qāḍī* calls the school of Sufis (*madhhab jamā‘a al-mutaṣawwifa*) or the holders of knowledge of hearts and states (*aṣḥāb ‘ilm al-qulūb wa-l-maḳāmat*) (‘Iyāḍ 2013, p. 627).

<sup>28</sup> On this issue, see Albarrán (2015, p. 154–55).

In al-Sha‘rānī’s *Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, ‘Iyāḍ’s is not the only “modified” death. So was that of Ibn Barraĵān (d. 1141), who, according to al-Sha‘rānī, was executed by the Almoravids in Marrakech (al-Sha‘rānī 2005, p. I 15).<sup>29</sup> Although the Andalusi Sufi, a follower of al-Ghazālī, was called to court in Marrakech accused of being an innovator, no source prior to al-Sha‘rānī mentions that he was executed and it was probably the Egyptian who invented this tradition (Bellver 2013, p. 659–81). Interestingly enough, Ibn Barraĵān was known as the “al-Ghazālī of al-Andalus,” and his call to trial in Marrakech came shortly before the public condemnation of the al-Ghazālī’s works in 1143. It seems that al-Sha‘rānī, causing ‘Iyāḍ to die suddenly because of al-Ghazālī’s curse, turned the Persian master into the avenger of those *fuqahā*’ who had attacked Sufism—and Sufis like Ibn Barraĵān—through the denigration of their memory, represented by ‘Iyāḍ.

In this sense, al-Sha‘rānī could also be proposing a parallel in which he would place himself in the position of al-Ghazālī, and ‘Iyāḍ in that of al-Sha‘rānī’s *fuqahā*’ enemies in his own time. It is interesting to see that in his writings, the Egyptian Sufi characterizes himself as a man under persecution because of his ideas, as

an acrobat who walks on the tightrope while the spectators wait for him to fall. (Winter 1982, p. 58)

comforting himself with the thought that all the great Sufis had suffered also persecution for their thoughts. He also states that the works of great mystics, such as Ibn ‘Arabī, al-Ghazālī or himself had been interpolated with heretical ideas, to undermine their prestige and knowledge (Winter 1982, p. 167).

Regarding the report according to which Ibn Tūmart would have ordered ‘Iyāḍ’s death accused of crypto-Judaism since he stayed all Saturdays at home claiming that he was writing the *Shifā*’—of unknown origin since al-Sha‘rānī does not quote its source and does not appear in any other work written before—could be a legend launched by the Almohads themselves in the twelfth century to denounce the *qāḍī*, their enemy, and also the *Kitāb al-Shifā*’, which includes clearly anti-Almohad passages. This account recalls the obsession that the Almohads, after ordering the forced conversion of all the Jews, had with crypto-Judaism.

<sup>29</sup> On this issue, see Bellver (2013, p. 659–81).

It should be remembered, for example, the order of the Almohad caliph al-Manṣūr according to which Jews converted to Islam had to wear distinctive clothes (al-Marrākushī 2005, p. 217; Ibn ‘Idhārī 2009, p. IV 300).<sup>30</sup> Moreover, Ibn Rushd, at the time of his fall out of grace with the Almohads, was temporarily exiled in Lucena, “the city of the Jews,” accused of Jewish ancestry (Fierro 2017, p. 131–52). Thus, it seems that the accusation of crypto-Judaism was usual against the enemies of the Almohad power.<sup>31</sup>

Likewise, Ibn Tūmart’s appearance in this narrative and the role he plays as avenger of those who attacked al-Ghazālī, especially in this context linked with al-Sha‘rānī, also recalls another of the legends set forth by the Almohads, that of the encounter of the *mahdī* Ibn Tūmart with al-Ghazālī in Baghdad and the promise of the founder of the Almohads to punish those who had condemned the works of the Persian master in the Islamic West (Ibn Simāk 1979, p. 104–05; Fierro 2000b, p. 107–24; Griffel 2005, p. 753–813; Fierro 2016, p. 73–97). These “Almohad forged traditions” could have reached al-Sha‘rānī through his Maghribi and Shādhili connection. It must be remembered that he was a descendant of Maghribis and that one of his ancestors, Mūsā Abū ‘Imrān, was a disciple of Abū Madyan and was sent by him to Egypt. And it also must not be forgotten that Abū Madyan, and therefore also Abū ‘Imrān, lived in the Almohad context,

<sup>30</sup>See, for example, Fierro (2010, p. 155–73; 2011b, p. 231–247) and Albarrán (2013, p. 48 and ff.; 2014, p. 79–91).

<sup>31</sup>Moreover, the Almoravids were also accused of Judaism by the Almohads. Al-Baydhaq stated that the direction of their mosques’ *qibla* was incorrect, something common among Jews but not among Muslims. Therefore, they should be torn down to be purified, and rebuilt again (al-Baydhaq 2004, p. 66). This discursive use of the Jews by the Almohads can also be seen in some authors close to the Unitarian movement. For example, Ibn al-Kardabūs blames the Jews for the bad situation of al-Andalus in the Ṭā’ifa period: “The affairs of the Muslims were entrusted to the Jews, so they caused the ravage of the lions, turned into chamberlains, viziers and secretaries. Meanwhile, the Christians went every year around al-Andalus captivating, looting, burning, destroying and taking prisoners” (Ibn al-Kardabūs 1971, p. 78). On the controversy against Judaism in al-Andalus, see, for example, Adang (1994, p. 15–23) and Adang (1994b). It is also remarkable to see how Jews and Judaism are used to shape the memory of Islamic people and deeds, been the ones that made ‘Iyāḍ an infidel worthy of punishment—in *Line D*, or a martyr—in *Line B*. It is possible that the clash that the Prophet had with Jewish tribes according to his *Sīra* is at the origin of this anthropological *topos*.

and that the mystic master even managed to have some contact with the Unitarian authorities and the caliph al-Manṣūr.<sup>32</sup>

## 1.6 FINAL REMARKS

According to the sources that have been analysed, it can be emphasized that there are several “memory lines” surrounding ‘Iyāḍ’s death through the Mediterranean. It is interesting to see how a single fact, and its narrative modification, became a vehicle for different phenomena: there is a struggle for the appropriation of the narrative of ‘Iyāḍ’s death.

Furthermore, the *qāḍī*’s death appears to be a place of memory and an identity symbol, probably due to ‘Iyāḍ’s status. Namely, a milestone that the different authors knew could influence the imagination and emotions of readers when modified. And that audience was not innocent or passive: books written by and for Mālikīs, *fuqabā’*, and Sufis have been analysed. The aim of Ibn Farḥūn, al-Bunnāhī or al-Sha’rānī was to mobilize the audience and make it part of their claims through ‘Iyāḍ’s disputed memory. And this was only possible because, as al-Bunnāhī stated, ‘Iyāḍ *was remembered*, and his remembrance set in motion identity processes, created cohesion and rejection, and generated various emotions. In this sense, ‘Iyāḍ himself, his figure, became a place of memory.

Moreover, he was not only remembered in the Islamic West, but in the Mediterranean, a fact that shows the importance of the *qāḍī*. Since his death, he became a meaningful symbol for the whole Islamic world that confirms that the *Masbriq* and its collective imaginary and memory cannot be understood without the Maghrib and vice versa. Therefore, in this sense, the Mediterranean, once again, unites rather than divides.

On the other hand, that the fact used to modify ‘Iyāḍ’s memory is that of his death, as also happened with that of Ibn Barrajān, is also revealing. The death and the way of dying are thus useful elements to draw the attention of the audience, as meaningful issues for the recipients of these speeches, probably due to the many emotions they could generate. Furthermore, death is also the last action one can perform alive, and, just

<sup>32</sup> It seems that al-Manṣūr was concerned, at least in some cases like those of Abū al-‘Abbās al-Sabī (d. 1204) or Abū Madyan (d. 1198), to be linked with important mystics. In fact, it seems that he even came to be considered a disciple of Abū al-‘Abbās al-Sabī himself, who resided in Marrakech. See Ferhat (1992, p. 185–204) and Cornell (1998, p. 79 and ff). It is worth mentioning that ‘Abd al-Salām b. Mashīsh, Abū Madyan’s master, was killed by followers of the anti-Almohad rebel Ibn Abī al-Ṭawājīn in 1227.



by modifying its narrative and memory, the meaning of an individual's entire previous life trajectory could be completely changed.

Likewise, as had happened with the *Kitāb al-Shifā'* itself, 'Iyāḍ's death is again used from very different contexts and for many different aims. There are a multitude of readings and receptions, in this case not of a text but of a fact, which becomes a multifaceted account. In certain Sufi contexts it has been shown how 'Iyāḍ is vilified because of his problems with al-Ghazālī, while in others he is venerated as a saint mainly due to the writing of the *Shifā'*.<sup>33</sup> In this particular issue, what we are looking at is a confrontation for the remembrance and the "memorialization" of two figures, 'Iyāḍ and al-Ghazālī, who had become symbols for Malikism and Sufism, respectively. According to the narratives of Ibn Farḥūn, al-Bunnāhī and al-Sha'rānī, 'Iyāḍ was an icon of Malikism and of the Mālikī *fuqahā'*, from the East to the West of the Islamicate world, and from a positive and a negative perspective.

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<sup>33</sup> "Without al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, the Maghrib would not be mentioned. And without the *Kitāb al-Shifā'*, 'Iyāḍ would not be mentioned."—Maghribi popular saying. See Castris (1924, p. 245–303) and Albarrán (2015, p. 100 and ff).

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# The “Bestsellers” of al-Andalus

*Maribel Fierro*

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Based on the information found both in Arabic biographical and bibliographical dictionaries of scholars, as well as in other sources, we can establish the names and trajectories of 11,831 scholars who were active in al-Andalus between the second/eighth–ninth/fifteenth centuries. Of these scholars, 5007 appear to have either written books of their own, or to have transmitted works written by others. We also know the titles and contents of the 13,730 works written and transmitted in al-Andalus during this period.<sup>1</sup> Because we lack similar figures for other regions of the

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<sup>1</sup>The resources that have enabled us to carry out this work are the *Historia de los Autores y Transmisores Andalusíes (HATA)* (see note 8), and the *Prosopography of the ‘Ulamā’ of al-Andalus*, directed by María Luisa Ávila and accessible at <https://www.eea.csic.es/pua/>

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M. Marcos Cobaleda (ed.), *Artistic and Cultural Dialogues in the Late Medieval Mediterranean*, Mediterranean Perspectives,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53366-3\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53366-3_2)



Islamic world, it is impossible to assess by comparison the extent to which al-Andalus's literary productivity and book circulation was normal or exceptional, or whether they exhibited any features that were peculiar to the Andalusí context. What is possible to establish, however, is the impact that Andalusí literary production had on the rest of the Islamic world. This chapter therefore aims precisely at providing, for the first time, an overview of the Andalusí works that circulated outside the Iberian Peninsula and achieved widespread popularity, and at explaining why they gained an audience outside the local context in which they were produced, as part of a broader project on the cultural impact of the Maghrib on the *Mashriq*.<sup>2</sup>

## 2.2 WHAT IS AN ANDALUSÍ “BESTSELLER”?

In the intellectual sphere, al-Andalus is perhaps best known for its role in the cultural transfer between the Islamic and Western Christian worlds, a favourite topic of researchers both in Spain and elsewhere who have written about the Iberian Peninsula's Islamic past.<sup>3</sup> However, Western scholars have shown much less interest in studying the Andalusí intellectual output in its own right, especially as regards al-Andalus's contributions to the Islamic religious sciences. Although there have been some changes to this overall lack of interest, the following reflections made seventeen years ago remain equally valid today:

It is researchers from Muslim countries who have studied Andalusí knowledge within its own context, i.e. that of a pre-modern Islamic society. After all, the Andalusí did not create or transmit their knowledge based on the influence it might have on the Christian or Western world. Their gaze was directed, first and foremost, at themselves, and, secondarily, at the rest of the

<sup>2</sup>This paper was written within the framework of the projects *Contextos locales y dinámicas globales: al-Andalus y el Magreb en el Oriente islámico* (Local contexts and global dynamics: al-Andalus and the Maghrib in the Islamic East) FFI2016-78878-R AEI/FEDER, EU, IPs M. Fierro and M. Penelas, and *Practicing knowledge in Islamic societies and their neighbours*, Anneliese Maier Award 2014 (Alexander von Humboldt Foundation). A preliminary version was presented at the 2nd International Workshop of the *ArtMedGIS* Project, *Dialogues in the Late Medieval Mediterranean: Between East and West*, organized by María Marcos Cobaleda in Granada, 13–14 November 2017. Materials related to this paper were presented at lectures given at Göttingen University (14 January 2019), the Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig (30 January 2019), and at the al-Furqan Foundation (3 April 2019). Many thanks to the organizers of these events for the opportunity to present this research.

<sup>3</sup>Fierro, “Las huellas del Islam a debate”.

Muslim world. This is why studies by researchers belonging to this same cultural and religious sphere have addressed in detail the Andalusī *‘ulamā’* (scholars) who studied fields of Islamic thought such as Qur’ānic commentary, the Traditions of the Prophet (*ḥadīth*), and the many fields of Islamic law. In any list of Andalusī authors and transmitters, the bulk will be made up of scholars of Islamic thought. However, to the non-specialist, the names of these authors will mean little to nothing. By contrast, any knowledgeable person educated in Islamic culture will recognize them immediately: Abū ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-Barr, Abū l-Walīd al-Bāḡī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyya, Ibn al-‘Arīf, al-Shāṭibī, to name just a few.

While the Andalusī authors whose names are familiar to a knowledgeable European (Averroes, Ibn Ḥazm or the mystic Ibn ‘Arabī) were of course important *‘ulamā’* in al-Andalus, if one were to have asked an educated Muslim in 9th/15th-century Granada who the most important scholars of al-Andalus were, they might not have mentioned any of the names familiar to a European today. As such, if we wish to break out of a Euro-centric vision of al-Andalus, we will have to make an effort to approach it on its own terms. (Fierro 2001, p. 10–11)

In terms of interest in Andalusī texts within the Islamic world, there have been changes over time in the attention paid to specific authors, genres and works. This means that, here too, the Andalusī authors who are well known today are not always the same as those who were well known in the past (I will return to this point later on). These and other factors must be taken into account when discussing Andalusī “bestsellers”, a term I am using in a very broad sense to evoke the popularity that certain works produced in al-Andalus enjoyed, and, in some cases, continue to enjoy today. Of course, in using this modern term I do not mean to suggest that the mechanisms, dynamics and circuits of production, sales, circulation and consumption were the same as those of the modern-day bestseller.<sup>4</sup> Several studies have been written on these mechanisms, dynamics and circuits in the Andalusī context<sup>5</sup>; however, there is certainly still room for a

<sup>4</sup>Recent studies on such mechanisms in the premodern Islamic world include—but are by no means limited to, as the literature has grown significantly in recent years—the following publications, in chronological order: Déroche (2000), Hanna (2003), Krätli and Lydon (2010), Gründler (2011), Görke and Hirschler (2011), Ghersetti and Metcalfe (2012), Frenkel (2017) and Behrens-Abouseif (2018).

<sup>5</sup>Specific case studies include Dandel (1993), Burns (1996), Mazzoli-Guintard (2006), al-Sāwirī (2009) and Ženka (2018). There are more general studies as well, such as Ferhat (1994), van Koningsveld (1994), Mus’ad (2000), al-Abbadi (2005), Viguera and Castillo

complete monograph on books in al-Andalus, covering everything we know to date and indicating the gaps that still need to be filled. Books were able to circulate outside the commercial circuits, being copied by students in the educational circles of their teachers, and transmitted to subsequent generations via inheritances and pious endowments.<sup>6</sup>

I mentioned earlier that I am using the term “bestseller” in a broad sense, to evoke the widespread popularity that certain works produced in al-Andalus enjoyed in the past. I am not just referring to works that had a particularly broad reach and impact in the territories of the Islamic West (al-Andalus and the Maghrib), but especially to those that managed to enjoy success across the Islamic world as a whole. A separate category would be those works which not only circulated beyond the confines of the Islamic world, but were even translated in the Western Christian world. I will not be addressing this last category here, although I will refer to it in passing in some cases. Likewise, I will not go into detail about the circulation of Andalusí texts following the spread of the printing press throughout the Islamic world, as this would force us to address issues such as print runs, or new circuits and forms of marketing that were very different from the traditional ones which had accompanied the manuscript. Still, I will include some references to this subject in order to illustrate its importance.

A work’s dissemination and impact can be measured by how many times it is cited in other texts,<sup>7</sup> by the number of manuscripts preserved, or by the number of works interrelated with it. By this I mean works that summarize, comment on, complement, refute or have some other such relationship with a prior work. Another index of popularity is whether or not a given work was widely used in the education process, which in some cases had to do with the author’s efforts to make the work accessible to the broadest readership possible, adapting his discourse to this aim. This is the case of didactic poetry, for example.

(2006), Espejo and Arias Torres (2008) and Martínez de Castilla (2010a), as well as the series *Primavera del Manuscrito Andalusí*. Again, this list is by no means exhaustive.

<sup>6</sup>A useful overview can be found in Rosenthal (1947). See also Toauti (2003) and Hirschler (2012). On al-Andalus, to name just a few studies, we have Ribera (1928), Giladi (1997), Labarta and Escribano (2000) and Martínez de Castilla (2010b).

<sup>7</sup>The digital humanities project *Kitab* directed by Sarah Savant is aimed at analysing the reuse of prior texts within the written production of the Islamic world, even where these works are not explicitly cited. In the future, this will make it possible to determine exactly which works were most widely used: <http://kitab-project.org/author/sarah/>

Here I will focus on works for which a large number of manuscripts have been preserved. As we will see, these were often the same ones that gave rise to a large number of related works, and were also connected to pedagogy. To identify these works, I have used the data collected in *HATA* (*Historia de los Autores y Transmisores Andalusíes*), a chronological repertoire of the works written in al-Andalus between the second/eighth-ninth/fifteenth centuries, as well as works written outside al-Andalus that are known to have circulated or been transmitted in the Iberian Peninsula. This repertoire includes biographical references to the authors, as well as bibliographical references to the works that they wrote (indicating, where relevant, the extant manuscripts, editions, translations and studies) and the works that they transmitted. This database can be accessed online at <http://kohepocu.cchs.csic.es/>.<sup>8</sup>

Before moving on, there are still a few reflections that need to be made. A work can have a major intellectual impact without enjoying a particularly wide circulation as a material object. This was the case, for example, of Ibn Ḥazm’s legal works, both on casuistry (*al-Muḥallā*, of which some ten manuscripts have survived) and on *uṣūl* (*al-Iḥkām*, three manuscripts). Despite the fact that relatively few manuscripts have been preserved, these works by Ibn Ḥazm elicited numerous refutations, some of them written, and were cited relatively often. Through these refutations and references, successive generations of jurists learned of the main arguments in Ibn Ḥazm’s doctrine without necessarily having read his work firsthand. In this case, because this impact does not translate into a large number of manuscripts, Ibn Ḥazm’s legal works were not a “bestseller” in the past, even though their intellectual legacy was significant.

To continue with the case of Ibn Ḥazm, his legal works could eventually be found easily in public and private libraries following the introduction of the printing press in the Arab-Islamic world. This is a process studied by Ahmad El Shamsy, who has found that at the beginning of the twentieth century the Islamic scholarly tradition and its textual canon were reinvented through the printing press and through the influence of Egyptian *‘ulamā’*, such as the Shākir family.<sup>9</sup> Ibn Ḥazm’s *al-Muḥallā* and *al-Iḥkām* were published by Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir in Cairo in the

<sup>8</sup> *HATA* includes the references found in Brockelmann and Sezgin’s *Geschichte*, as well as the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* and the *Biblioteca de al-Andalus*, works that I will only occasionally refer to directly.

<sup>9</sup> El Shamsy (2020).

late 1920s, providing both works with a wide readership in the modern world, to the point that they now form part of the private libraries of most Muslim scholars, both Sunnī and Shīʿī.

Ibn Ḥazm is also the author of a modern-day “bestseller”, namely his *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma*, commonly known in English as *The Ring of the Dove* after the title of A. J. Arberry’s 1951 translation. There are several print editions of this book in Arabic, as well as numerous translations into other languages. And yet it is a work that has only been preserved in a single Arabic manuscript, and was not widely read in the pre-modern context. In this case, its fame starting in the early twentieth century could mislead us into thinking that it was also a “bestseller” in the past.

### 2.3 THE “BESTSELLERS” OF AL-ĀNDALUS

The catalogues of manuscripts preserved at libraries around the world, both inside and outside the Islamic context, reveal that—for a variety of reasons—certain works have come down to us in great numbers. Thanks to the data collected in *HATA (Historia de los Autores y Transmisores Andalusíes)*, we can now determine which works have been preserved in the greatest number of manuscripts.<sup>10</sup> Here I will only mention those which surpass a certain number of copies. Moreover, we must bear in mind that these are only approximate figures for several reasons: the catalogues have not been exhaustively reviewed; there are still libraries that have not been catalogued and those that have can still turn up surprises; and, lastly, when there are specific studies on a given work, our awareness of its extant copies tends to increase dramatically. Thus, for works that have not been studied in depth, there is always the possibility that more manuscripts exist than those that are currently identified.

In this case, the works here considered are those preserved in numbers higher than 40 manuscripts. The works in question, listed here in chronological order by the author’s date of death, are:

1. *Rutbat al-ḥakīm* by Maslama b. Qāsim (295/908–353/964). Born in Cordoba, he traveled to the Middle East and returned to al-Andalus, where he died. There are 65 preserved manuscripts of this

<sup>10</sup> *HATA* includes a “catalogue of catalogues”.

- alchemy treatise.<sup>11</sup> Unlike the rest of the works in this list, this is the only book that has been published only recently.<sup>12</sup>
2. *Sirāj al-mulūk* by al-Ṭurṭūshī (c. 451/1059–520/1126). Born in Tortosa, he moved to the Middle East in 476/1083, finally settling in Alexandria in 490/1097, where he would end his days without ever returning to al-Andalus. He composed this “mirror of princes” for a vizier of the Fatimid caliph. *HATA* records around 41 manuscripts, and indicates that it was also translated into Turkish and Persian.
  3. *Al-Shifā’ bi-ta’rīf ḥuqūq al-Mustafā* by Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ (d. 544/1149). Born in Ceuta, this Mālikī jurist never traveled to the East. His work deals with the merits and prerogatives of the Prophet Muḥammad. *HATA* records approximately 200 manuscripts. Dagmar Riedel has identified many more in her project on this work.<sup>13</sup> There are modern translations into English and French.
  4. *Ḥirz al-amānī fī wajh al-tahānī* or *al-Qaṣīda al-shāṭibiyya* by al-Shāṭibī (538/1143–590/1194). Born in Játiva in 572/1175, he eventually settled in Cairo, where he taught at the Fāḍiliyya *madrasa*. This didactic work for teaching Qur’ānic readings consists of an explanation, in verse, of *al-Taysīr fī l-qirā’āt al-sab’* by Abū ‘Amr al-Dānī (371/981–444/1053).<sup>14</sup> *HATA* records approximately 120 manuscripts. However, Zohra Azgal (École Pratique des Hautes Études) has located many more.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup>On this number of manuscripts (*HATA* shows just 17) see Callatāy and Moureau (2015). The authors of this article are currently working on an edition of the work.

<sup>12</sup>Madelung, Wilferd (ed.) (2017): *The Book of the Rank of the Sage, Rutbat al-Ḥakīm by Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurṭubī*. Arabic Text with an Introduction (Corpus Alchemicum Arabicum; 4). Zurich: Living Human Heritage Publications)

<sup>13</sup>The project *Making Books Talk: The Material Evidence of Manuscripts of the Kitāb al-Shifā’ by Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ (d. 1149) for the Reception of an Andalusian Biography of the Prophet between 1100 and 1900 (MASHQI)*, Marie-Curie H2020-MSCA-IF-2015, duration: 2017–2018.

<sup>14</sup>*HATA* records approximately 70 manuscripts of this work. Although it should therefore have made the list, I ultimately chose to leave it out since it is also represented in al-Shāṭibī’s work, thus making room to reflect a broader array of topics.

<sup>15</sup>According to her talk at the conference *The Maghrib in the Mashriq*, organized by M. Fierro and M. Penelas (AMOI Project), Residencia de Estudiantes, Madrid, 20–21 December 2018. <http://cchs.csic.es/en/event/conference-maghrib-mashriq>. Accessed on 2 May 2019. See now Zohra Azgal, Andalusī Scholars on Qur’ānic Readings in the Islamic East: The Case of Abū al-Qāsim al-Shāṭibī (538–590 H/1143–1194 CE), in M. Fierro and M. Penelas (eds.), *The Maghrib in the Mashriq. Travel, Knowledge and Identity*, De Gruyter, forthcoming.

5. *Urjūzat al-wildān* or *al-Muqaddima al-qurtūbiyya*, attributed to Yahyà al-Qurṭubī. Although it is difficult to identify the text's author,<sup>16</sup> I believe that it can be reliably dated to the sixth/twelfth century, as I will explain further along. It is a treatise in verse on the basic tenets of Islam. *HATA* records more than 40 manuscripts, but given the characteristics of this work (i.e. a didactic poem), a more refined search would likely yield many more.
6. *Kitāb al-jāmi' li-mufradāt al-adwiya wa-l-aghdlhiya* by Ibn al-Bayṭār (576/1180 or 583/1187–646/1248). Born in Malaga, he traveled to the Middle East in around 617/1220, living first in Cairo, in the service of the Ayyubid sultan, and later on in Damascus. There are approximately 80 manuscripts of this book on simples (of which it records some 1400).
7. *Al-jāmi' li-ahkām al-Qur'ān* by al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273). Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr b. Farḥ al-Anṣārī al-Khazraǧī al-Qurṭubī fled al-Andalus following the Christian conquest of Cordoba in 633/1236, eventually settling in Upper Egypt, where he lived until his death. It was there that he wrote the work which earned him a place in posterity, his exegesis of the Qur'ān, 50 manuscripts of which can be found in *HATA*. The encyclopaedic nature of al-Qurṭubī's *Tafsīr* makes it a highly useful reference work in a number of fields, including law. Its popularity continues into the present.
8. *Al-Alfiyya* by Ibn Mālik (d. 672/1274), born in Jaén in 600/1203 or 601/1204, he settled in Damascus, where he lived until his death. The *Alfiyya* is a summary in approximately 1000 verses of a grammatical treatise by the same author, *al-Kāfiya al-shāfiya*, which is in turn 2757 verses long. It is said that he wrote it in imitation of *al-Durra al-alfiyya* by the Egypt-based Maghribi grammarian Ibn Mu'ṭī (564/1168-9-628/1231).<sup>17</sup> There are some 120 preserved manuscripts of this work.
9. *Al-Ājurrūmiyya*, by the North African author Ibn Ājurrūm (672/1273–723/1323).<sup>18</sup> It is a short grammatical treatise explaining the *i'rāb* system. Although *HATA* only includes some 30 manu-

<sup>16</sup> I believe that the common identification of its author as Yahyà b. 'Umar b. Sa'dūn b. Tammām b. Muḥammad al-Azdī al-Qurṭubī (486/1093–567/1172) is mistaken, as I will explain subsequently.

<sup>17</sup> Ibn Mu'ṭī completed his *al-Durra al-alfiyya fī 'ilm al-'arabiyya* in 595/1198–99 (Trouneau, "Ibn Mu'ṭī").

<sup>18</sup> *HATA* includes non-Andalusī authors who spent time in al-Andalus (*ghurabā'*), which is why Ibn Ājurrūm and Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ have been included.

scripts, this work gave rise to approximately 60 commentaries and related works (e.g. versifications) by later authors, which attests to its widespread pedagogical use. It even gave rise to three Latin translations (Troupeau 1962; Aguiar 2019).

10. *Kashf al-asrār ‘an ‘ilm (ḥurūf) al-ghubār* by al-Qalaṣādī (815/1412?–891/1486). ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Qurashī al-Baṣī was born in al-Andalus, performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, and studied in Egypt and North Africa. Afterwards he settled in Granada, and died in Bāja (Tunisia). He is the author of a number of works on a wide range of topics, including grammar, law, *ḥadīth*, and in particular arithmetic and algebra, to which his *Kashf al-asrār* belongs. It is in fact a simplified version of his *al-Tabṣira fī ‘ilm al-ḥisāb*, made easier to understand for use in education. Some 50 manuscripts of *Kashf al-asrār* have been preserved.

Bearing in mind that these figures are only approximate, the ranking of the works selected here, from most manuscripts to least, is as follows:

1. *Al-Shifā’* by Qāḍī ‘Iyād (d. 544/1149)
2. *Ḥirz al-amānī fī wajh al-tahānī* or *al-Qaṣīda al-shāṭibiyya* by al-Shāṭibī (538/1143–590/1194)
3. *Al-Alfiyya* by Ibn Mālik (d. 672/1274)
4. *Kitāb al-jāmi li-mufradāt al-adwiya wa-l-aghdlhiya* by Ibn al-Bayṭar (576/1180 or 583/1187–646/1248)
5. *Rutbat al-ḥakīm* by Maslama b. Qāsim (295/908–353/964)
6. *Al-jāmi li-ahkām al-Qur’ān* by al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273)
7. *Kashf al-asrār an ilm (ḥurūf) al-ghubār* by al-Qalaṣādī (815/1412?–891/1486)
8. *Sirāj al-mulūk* by al-Ṭurṭūshī (ca. 451/1059–520/1126)
9. *Urjūzat al-wildān* or *al-Muqaddima al-qurṭubiyya*
10. *Al-Ājurrūmiyya* by Ibn Ājurrūm (672/1273–723/1323)

Among the characteristics of these works, we find the following:

- Five are didactic texts (2, 3, 7, 9, 10), and of these five, three are didactic poems (2, 3, 9) dealing with Qur’ānic readings, grammar, mathematics and the basic beliefs of Islam.
- Three have an encyclopaedic character (1, 4, 6), covering the merits and prerogatives of the Prophet, medical treatments and diet, and the Qur’ān, respectively. In other words, two of them are related to the foundations of Islam (its sacred book and its prophet,



who is also the seal of prophecy), which constitute the basic core of Muslims' religious life, and one of the titles indicates the book's healing power ("Healing through the declaration of the exclusive rights of the Chosen One").<sup>19</sup> The other work has to do with elements or materials that in and of themselves have a therapeutic effect, or which are used as an ingredient in medicines.

- Three works cover non-religious sciences (alchemy, medicine, mathematics), including one (*Rutbat al-ḥakīm*) whose circulation, both past and present, has always been "marginal", insofar as it seems to have left hardly any trace other than these manuscript copies themselves. Some libraries today continue to regulate access to *Rutbat al-ḥakīm*, considering its content to be "dangerous" from a religious perspective. While some situate al-Ṭurūṣhī's *Sirāj al-mulūk* squarely within the context of Islam, it in fact covers a number of topics that are not strictly religious, given its aim of instructing the "prince" in universal political values.
- Two are on grammar (3, 10).
- Lastly, six of the ten works were written between the sixth/twelfth-seventh/thirteenth centuries, from the end of the Almoravid period through the Almohad period: *al-Shifā'* by Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ (d. 544/1149), *Urjūzat al-wildān*, *Ḥirz al-amānī fī wajh al-tahānī* by al-Shāḥibī (538/1143–590/1194), *Kitāb al-jāmi' li-mufradāt al-adwiya wa-l-aghdhhiya* by Ibn al-Bayṭār (576/1180 or 583/1187–646/1248), *al-Jāmi' li-ahkām al-Qur'ān* by al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273), and *al-Alfiyya* by Ibn Mālik (d. 672/1274). Therefore, the majority of the "bestsellers" of al-Andalus<sup>20</sup> were written by authors either living or brought up under the Berber empires. These six works will be the subject of the following pages.

<sup>19</sup> Adapted from the Spanish translation by Serrano Ruano (2009).

<sup>20</sup> I hope to be able to work in the near future on the bestsellers of the Islamic West as a whole, which will necessarily include, probably as number one, *Dalā'il al-khayrāt* by al-Jazūli (d. 869/1465), a text that circulated most of all in Sufi networks.

## 2.4 THE “BESTSELLERS” OF THE SIXTH/ TWELFTH-SEVENTH/THIRTEENTH CENTURIES

Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s work opens this list of the six “bestsellers” written under the Berber empires. As I have already discussed elsewhere the reasons that led him to write the *Shifā’*, I will merely summarize them here (Fierro 2011; Albarrán 2015). Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ lived under the Almoravids, whom he served as a judge, remaining loyal to them even after the Almohad conquest of Ceuta. His book, which praises the merits and prerogatives of the Prophet Muḥammad, seems to have had as one of its aims—among others—to polemicize against those who believe that other human beings can compare with the Prophet, such as the friends of God (*awliyā*) and the “rightly guided” or Mahdīs. The Almohads arose precisely as followers of Ibn Tūmart, whom they considered a Mahdī and infallible *imām*, a perfect guide whose perfection enabled him to serve as a guide for others. Ibn Tūmart was not only described as *al-Mahdī*, but also as heir to the “station” of prophecy and infallibility (*wārith maqām al-nubuwwa wa-l-‘isma*).<sup>21</sup> Ibn Tūmart’s profession of faith—which also circulated in Berber, although the text that has been preserved is in Arabic—had to be memorized by the inhabitants of the territory governed by the Almohads, as a way to demonstrate their conversion from the false Islam of the Almoravids (accused of anthropomorphism and therefore infidelity) to the true Islam brought by the Mahdī. The Almohads were the true believers (*al-mu’minūn*), the representatives of the true Islamic doctrine of oneness or *tawḥīd* (hence their name, *al-muwahhidūn*). Differences of opinion (*ikhtilāf*) in matters of religion were to be rejected, as there could only be one Truth, knowledge of which was guaranteed by the Mahdī. The Mālikī school was criticized for its dependence on works of casuistry (*furū’*) that strayed from the content of the two major sources of Islam, the Qur’ān and the Traditions of the Prophet. Mālikī jurists were viewed with suspicion, and the first Almohad caliphs sought to replace them with new politico-religious elites, the *ṭalaba*, destined to promulgate the doctrine of the new regime. They were therefore handpicked by the Almohad authorities, and were expected to work in their service, answering to them

<sup>21</sup> For this reference, see Fierro (2016, note 68). The chronicler Ibn Šāḥib al-Šalāt (d. after 594/1197) describes Ibn Tūmart as “he who rose up at God’s command in order to carry out the duty” (*al-nāhiḍ bi-amr Allāh ta’ālā qiyām<sup>am</sup> bi-l-wājib*) and as “he who cured the religion of its sickness and suffering” (*shāfi l-dīn min waṣābihi wa-alamibi*).

directly (Fricaud 1997). The changes introduced by the Almohads were presented not as an innovation, but as a return to the original Muslim community. However, they were experienced as a true revolution for those who lived through them, as they represented a break with what had been considered proper and acceptable till that time, as well as creating a discontinuity with the past down to the level of sight and sound.<sup>22</sup> One of the ways that Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ tackled the Almohads' challenge to the Mālikī *fuqahā*' was through his book *al-Shifā*'. This anti-Mahdist book emphasizes the unrepeatable nature of the Prophet, and insists that after his death Muslims must be guided by the '*ulamā*', and specifically by the Mālikī '*ulamā*', scholars who were neither recruited by rulers nor answered directly to them. Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ also composed a biographical dictionary of the Mālikī school, specifically to demonstrate that the school's *fuqahā*' were the ones best qualified—as interpreters of religious law and as guides of the Muslims—to know what to do in this life and how to secure a place in the next.

While the context we have just described explains what drove Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ to write the *Shifā*', it does not explain its great success. Pending the publication of Dagmar Riedel's findings in her study on the manuscript tradition of the *Shifā*',<sup>23</sup> I would venture that one possible reason was the work's content. Although Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) criticized it for exaggerating the figure of Muḥammad, this exaggeration elevated Muḥammad far above the rest of humanity, right at a time when the veneration of the Prophet was growing. There was thus a convergence between the work's content and Muslims' new religious needs.<sup>24</sup>

Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ was not the only Mālikī to react against the Almohad challenge during its most revolutionary period under the first caliph, 'Abd al-Mu'min (r. 527/1133–563/1168). We will see how the Almohads developed an educational program aimed at "Almohadizing" the territories of the Empire established by 'Abd al-Mu'min, forcing their opponents to push back against these efforts.<sup>25</sup> Whereas the Almohads opposed the system of legal schools, and in particular the Mālikī school, and sought to

<sup>22</sup> Along these lines, see Fierro (2012).

<sup>23</sup> See note 10 above.

<sup>24</sup> On this process, see Rubin (1995).

<sup>25</sup> Over time, the Almohads gradually lowered their expectations of change. The Mālikīs, on the other hand, ultimately came to an understanding with the Almohads, even though under the first three caliphs they lost most of the power and authority they had enjoyed under the Almoravids.

impose one sole profession of faith, the Mālikīs and Ash‘arīs rejected a doctrine and set of practices that they considered heretical, and did all that was in their hands to defend themselves against the Almohads’ attacks (A‘rāb 1985; Thiele 2018). The author of *Urjūzat al-wildān* should very probably be situated within the same context.

*Urjūzat al-wildān* is a poem in *rajaz* verse that briefly explains the five pillars of Islam (the *shahāda*, prayer, charity, fasting and pilgrimage) from a Mālikī perspective. It belongs to the *qawā‘id al-islām* genre, aimed at teaching the basic tenets of Islam, in this case with a Mālikī slant. Prose works in this genre had already been written in al-Andalus from early on.<sup>26</sup> This is the case of the *Mukhtaṣar* by al-Ṭulayṭulī (fourth/tenth century), which Abū Ḥātim al-Ḍarīr (d. before 658/1260) would later render in verse. The genre appears to have flourished especially after the mid-fifth/eleventh century, with Mālikī authors such as Abū l-Walīd al-Bājī (d. 474/1081) and Ibn Rushd al-Jadd (d. 520/1126), whose *al-Muqaddima fī l-farā‘id* was later versified by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Raqa‘ī (alive in 853/1449). The most famous text is that of Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ, *Kitāb al-i‘lām bi-ḥudūd qawā‘id al-islām*, which remains popular today. There is even a modern Spanish translation, intended to provide converts to Islam with a simple guide to the fundamental obligations of all Muslims. In the past, the work of Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ was widely read, especially in the Maghrib, and was the subject of numerous commentaries, some of them anonymous, others written by well-known ‘ulamā’ such as Aḥmad b. Qāsim al-Qabbāb al-Fāsī (d. 778/1376 or 779/1377) and al-Qalaṣādī (d. 891/1486). Similar works were written in later periods.<sup>27</sup> *Urjūzat al-wildān* was not the first work in verse written for the purpose of teaching the basic principles of the Islamic faith. In addition to the *Qaṣīda fī l-adab wa-l-sunna* by al-Jazīrī (d. 394/1004), the famous expert in Qur’ān reading Abū ‘Amr al-Dānī (d. 444/1052) wrote an *Urjūza fī uṣūl al-sunna* and transmitted a work related to the genre, *al-Arba‘a al-ahādīth allatī bunīya ‘alayhā l-islām ‘alayhā*. We can therefore conclude that, starting in the fifth/eleventh century, in al-Andalus there was a growing need to better understand what it meant to be a Muslim, in terms of both doctrine and religious practice. This need led to the production of works that could be easily memorized and made

<sup>26</sup>The references to the works listed below can be found in *HATA*.

<sup>27</sup>Among them are those of ‘Abd al-Wāḥid b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Abī l-Sadād al-Mālaqī (d. 705/1305), *Uṣūl al-khamsa allatī bunīya ‘alayhā l-islām* and Abū Ḥayyān al-Garnāḥī (d. 743/1342 or 745/1344), *Kitāb al-i‘lām bi-arkān al-islām*.

Muslims' five basic obligations more readily understandable. This development may also be related to the fact that the fifth/eleventh century was when Muslims came to make up the majority of the population of al-Andalus; in other words, it was the moment when the number of "old" Muslims surpassed that of "new" Muslims. A connection can be drawn between this demographic shift and changes of a religious and doctrinal nature, as suggested decades ago by Richard W. Bulliet (Bulliet 1979), as well as the growing concern with tying belief to knowledge and understanding (Serrano 2002).

As for the *Urjūzat al-wildān* or *Children's poem in rajaz verse*, the editors and translators of this didactic poem have pointed out that it is a difficult text, intended to be taught by a teacher who would have to explain in detail the meaning of each word and verse (Ebied and Young 1974). The poem is also known as *al-Manzūma al-qurtubiyya* or *al-Muqaddima al-qurtubiyya*, a title indicating that the work is intended for beginners (the *wildān* or children of the original title), acting as an "introduction" that will lead them to a deeper and broader understanding as they go on to study other types of works. *Urjūzat al-wildān* has proved very successful down through the centuries, especially in the Islamic West. Indeed, the manuscripts are to be found mostly in libraries in Morocco, as well as in Mauritania and sub-Saharan African countries such as Nigeria. Another sign of *Urjūzat al-wildān*'s popularity is the number of commentaries on it. Of these, the most important were those of Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Khalīl al-Tatā'ī (d. 942/1535) and the famed 'ālim and Sufi Zarrūq (d. 899/1493), whose *Sharḥ al-Muqaddima al-qurtubiyya* has been preserved in 25 manuscripts.

What is unclear is who actually wrote the *Urjūzat al-wildān*. Y. Ebied and M. J. L. Young, who prepared and edited the text's English translation, follow the identification proposed in Brockelmann's *Geschichte*, which attributes it to Sābiq al-Dīn Abū Bakr Yahyā b. 'Umar b. Sa'dūn b. Tammām b. Muḥammad al-Azdī al-Qurṭubī (486/1093–567/1172), a famous grammarian and traditionist born in Cordoba, who traveled to the East in 506/1112–511/1117 and settled in Mosul, where he lived until his death. There are a number of problems with this identification.<sup>28</sup> None of Ibn Sa'dūn's biographers attributed this text to him. If he had written it, we would expect to find manuscripts of the work in the countries where he went on to live, in particular bearing in mind that he probably did not

<sup>28</sup> As I have explained in Fierro (2007).

write it before leaving al-Andalus, as he was only 19–24 years old at the time. Moreover, the name that appears in the manuscripts explicitly affirms that the *‘ālim* who wrote the *Urjūza* was “al-Qurṭubī al-dār”, that is that he had settled in Cordoba but was not from there. Based on the information that appears in the manuscripts, all we know for certain about the author of *Urjūzat al-wildān* is that he was called Abū Zakariyyā’ and/or Abū Bakr Yaḥyà al-Qurṭubī al-dār, lived in Cordoba, and was active after the mid-sixth/twelfth century. This is because the latest authorities cited in the text are the Mālikī jurists Abū Bakr b. al-‘Arabī al-Ishbīlī (d. 543/1148) and Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ (d. 544/1149). While this provides us with a *terminus post quem*, we still lack a *terminus ante quem*.<sup>29</sup> It is striking that the author’s name given in the manuscripts does not include a *nasab*. He may have been a new convert to Islam who moved to Cordoba and became interested in the five pillars precisely because of his recent conversion. In this case, he would likely have belonged to the *dhimmī* community, as unless he was a native speaker of Arabic it would have been nearly impossible to write a didactic poem in this language. Another possibility to consider is that the author may have wanted to keep his identity a secret, and therefore chose to use an abbreviated version of his name. If so, this would indicate that the author of the *Urjūzat al-wildān* was writing in a hostile environment. Based on this, I would suggest that *Urjūzat al-wildān* could have been written in the early years of the Almohad revolution by a Mālikī author who, concerned that the Almohad educational program would succeed, decided to set down a didactic work that would help educate young people and ensure the survival of the Mālikī school. Compared to the *Shifā’*, whose emphasis on the Prophet has given to Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s work a more universal appeal throughout the Islamic world, *Urjūzat al-wildān*’s sphere of influence was restricted to the predominantly Mālikī territories.

As with the *Urjūzat al-wildān*, the works of al-Shāṭibī and Ibn Mālik are didactic poems, and reflect one of the most salient trends of the Almohad period: an enthusiasm for education.<sup>30</sup> Both were “bestsellers” not only of the pre-modern period, but of the modern period as well, and continue to be used throughout the Islamic world today.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Locating the oldest extant manuscript could help resolve this issue.

<sup>30</sup> Dib (2011). On the Almoravid period, see Benaboud and al-Qadiri (1991). I am presently working on a study on education in Almohad times.

<sup>31</sup> On West Africa, see <http://digital.library.northwestern.edu/arbms/historical.html>

In al-Andalus, the sixth/twelfth century was characterized by a keen interest in educational reform, with particular attention to the study of Arabic grammar. Prior to the triumph of the Almohad movement, the scholar from Seville Abū Bakr b. al-ʿArabī (d. 543/1148)—a Mālikī reformer influenced by Ibn Ḥazm and al-Ghazālī—had already proposed changing the curriculum of study that had prevailed until that time (Cano Ávila, García Sanjuán and Tawfiq 2009). Abū Bakr b. al-ʿArabī disagreed with the common practice of having children start off by studying the Qurʾān, memorizing a text they could hardly understand, especially in cases where they were not even Arabic speakers.<sup>32</sup> Abū Bakr b. al-ʿArabī was convinced that Arabic grammar should be studied right from the start of the education process, later giving way to the study of the Qurʾān so that students could understand the sacred text.

Abū Bakr b. al-ʿArabī's proposal was a good match for the revolutionary aims of the Almohads, and, more generally, for the Berber rulers' need to Arabize and Islamicize the populations of their territories across the Maghrib. It was also in line with the aforementioned concern with ensuring that Arabic-speaking Muslims could better understand their belief system, and with opening up the realm of knowledge to all strata of society. Since Islam lacks a hierarchical structure or priestly class like that of the Catholic Church, the world of religious knowledge is, in principle, open to everyone, as is reflected in the education system. The emphasis on personal contact and relationships as opposed to institutional ones, and the preference for orality—without excluding the written word—helped maintain a high level of openness in an education system characterized by its informality. Of course this is not to say that hierarchies did not exist, or that there were not barriers restricting access to knowledge or impeding fully open participation in the education system, as studied by Jonathan Berkey. Despite its open and informal nature, the system did indeed place obstacles in the way of those who wished to join it, for example by allowing the *ʿulamāʾ* to privilege their own descendants, passing positions of scholarship on from father to son. All of this contributed to making the *ʿulamāʾ* an elite group that was difficult to break into.<sup>33</sup> Because one of the Almohads' initial objectives was to replace the old elites with new and

<sup>32</sup> Remember that Abū Bakr b. al-ʿArabī ended his days under both the Almoravids (whom he served as *qāḍī*), and the Almohads. The Almoravids were Ṣanhāja Berbers and the original Almohads Maṣmūda Berbers who were scarcely Arabized.

<sup>33</sup> Berkey (1992, p. 216).

loyal ones, they had to come up with mechanisms to quickly train the young supporters they had recruited from across their empire. Although similar stories can be found in prior periods, it is in the Almohad period where we find the most examples of young people without family connections who nevertheless managed to gain access to the world of scholarship.

The Almohads wanted to create new elites, as well as change certain religious beliefs and practices. In the first period after seizing and consolidating power, such changes were imposed by force. Next, as it became necessary to shift from conversion to conviction, the Almohads took to new methods, such as public debates, discussion sessions (*majālis*), sermons, and public readings of the caliph’s letters at mosques. A key goal was to train new religious elites who would be loyal to the caliphs. Another was to consolidate knowledge of Arabic, since many recruits did not speak the language. Although Berber enjoyed an important position in the empire, over time—and especially following the incorporation of Arab tribes into the caliph’s army—the importance of Arabic would only grow. For instance, the ethnically Berber grammarian al-Jazūlī (540/1145–607/1211) wrote *al-Muqaddima*, a useful introduction to Arabic grammar that was later versified by the poet Abū ‘Amr b. Giyāth al-Sharīṣī (536/1141–619/1223 or 620/1223).<sup>34</sup> Likewise, the grammarian Ibn Maḍā’ al-Lakhmī al-Qurṭubī al-Jayyānī (513/1120–592/1196) wrote a book that emphasized the need for educators to make the learning process easier by avoiding complicated grammatical explanations (al-Sarṭāwī 1988; Versteegh 2012). It is no coincidence that Ibn Maḍā’ was appointed by the first Almohad caliph to oversee his own children’s education. During the Almohad period, grammar studies became particularly important, and were considered indispensable for jurists and judges, based on the belief that a proper understanding of grammar would eliminate legal discrepancies (*ikhtilāf*).

Alongside the importance placed on grammar studies, the Almohads also promoted the composition of didactic works in almost every field and they were often written in verse. As in other areas, the Almohads resemble the Fatimids in this respect (Fierro 2010). The great architect of Fatimid legal doctrine, Qāḍī al-Nu’mān, wrote a *qaṣīda* on *fiqh*, *al-Urjūza al-muntakhaba*, and another in defense of Fatimid legitimacy. Both of these

<sup>34</sup> See Bencheneb’s biography of al-Jazūlī: having lived in poverty under the Almoravids, the Almohad caliph took him under his wing and tasked him with delivering the Friday sermon at the Friday Mosque of Marrakech. See also Borrego Soto (2011, p. 35).



poems were summaries of other works he had written previously, which he set in verse in order to aid in their memorization and dissemination. He also composed his *Kitāb al-dīnār*, an educational booklet with quotes from the Ismaʿīlī imams, whose low price (one dīnār) was intended to make it accessible to the broadest readership possible (Hamdani 2006, p. 50–52, 178, note 55; Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān 1978, p. 359–60). Similarly, Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064), the Zāhiri thinker whose doctrines were in some ways similar to those of the Almohads, frequently produced concise compendiums that were summarized in terms of both form and content. They were intended for easy understanding and memorization, so that readers could quickly become familiar with his doctrines. He also wrote the didactic poem *Qaṣīda fī uṣūl al-fiqh al-zāhiriyya*, in which he lists the basic elements of Zāhiri law, accompanied by short explanations (Puerta Vilchez and Ramón Guerrero 2004).

The Almohads did not invent the didactic poem, which can be found across the Islamic world from a relatively early date. These poems appear to have flourished alongside the establishment of the *madrasas*, educational institutions that began to proliferate beginning in the sixth/twelfth century, and especially in the seventh/thirteenth century (Geert Jan van Gelder 1995). Poetry aided memorization, and also had to do with the fact that in the societies of this period reading was a fundamentally spoken and heard activity: readers brought the written word to life by speaking it out loud. Music, poetry and recitation, therefore, had an important role in education. The versification of treatises on a variety of topics (theology, law, medicine, grammar, etc.), especially in *rajaz* verse, was aimed precisely at memorization (Ullman 1966). In the words of van Gelder:

The subject matter could conveniently be compressed, often in highly condensed form, in the space of a relatively short text. This means that, rather paradoxically, many such poems are far from being didactic in the modern sense of the word, if by ‘didactic’ we mean something that introduces a pupil gradually to a certain field of knowledge, teaching him not merely facts or how to apply certain rules automatically, but also making him understand the facts and how they hang together. It is obvious that many an *urjūza* is not so much an introduction to be presented to beginners as an *aide-mémoire*, a handy compendium for those who have already mastered all or most of the subject. In spite of this, it seems that until quite recent times young students were confronted with precisely such poems, to be learned by rote without much, or any, understanding at first. The surprising thing is that this seemed to have worked in many cases. Many *urjūzas* are so obscure,

in fact, that they invite commentators; consequently, there is an extensive body of commentaries and supercommentaries surrounding many famous didactic poems. (Van Gelder 1995, p. 108)

This is the case, as we have seen, of the *Shāṭibiyya* and the *Alfiyya*. Many of these didactic poems formed part of the first tier of the learning process, consisting of *mahfūzāt* (memorized texts) or *mukhtaṣarāt*—that is, abbreviated texts intended to be memorized and learned much like the Qur’ān, prior to beginning what we might call “advanced studies”. The important thing about this first phase was not so much what students memorized, but rather laying the groundwork for them to go on and study with teachers who would focus on textual commentary and problems of interpretation (Messick 1992).

A great many didactic poems were written in the Almohad period. The preacher Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ishbīlī rendered the Almohad creeds in Arabic verse (Ibn Ṣāhib al-Ṣalāt 1964, p. 229/60). Ibn Ṭufayl (494/1100 or 506/1110–581/1185) wrote his *Urjūza fī l-tibb*, whose precedents are in turn to be found in the work of Ibn Sīna.<sup>35</sup> Ibn al-Ghāzī (d. 591/1194), a judge in Ceuta, composed a series of *manẓūmāt ‘ilmiyya* dealing with a number of legal issues (Velázquez Basanta 2013). Averroes (520/1126–595/1198) wrote an *Urjūza ḥawla qawā’id al-islām al-khamsa* (Gómez Nogales 1978, p. 387). Ibn Yāsmīn (d. 601/1204) wrote an *Urjūza fī l-jabr wa-l-muqābala* on algebra, which was widely read and gave rise to a number of commentaries (Brentjes 2018, p. 83, 173, 239, 274).

Although al-Shāṭibī and Ibn Mālīk lived most of their lives outside of the areas under Almohad control, their talent for didactic poetry should be understood in connection with the context in which they were born and raised. Once in the East,<sup>36</sup> the education they had received back home was to help them fit in with the *madrassa*-based education system, which demanded the same sorts of educational tools fostered under the Almohads.

<sup>35</sup> Muhammad and al-Ḥājj 1986. This work is currently being studied by Regula Foster.

<sup>36</sup> They emigrated either out of opposition to the Almohad cause or due to the advance of the Christian armies, or perhaps due to some other cause. In the case of Ibn Mālīk (d. 672/1274), he seems to have emigrated due to the Christian conquests, whereas al-Shāṭibī (538/1143–590/1194), who lived for the first part of his life on the Eastern coast of al-Andalus under Ibn Mardānīsh, left al-Andalus when the area fell under Almohad control. It appears that he began work on the *Shāṭibiyya* while still living in al-Andalus.

Didactic poetry did not stop being written with the fall of the Almohads, since the *madrasas* founded by the post-Almohad dynasties, such as the Merinids, ensured their continued relevance. Ibn Farah al-Ishbīlī (625/1228–699/1299) wrote a *Manzūma fī l-ḥadīth*, while Ibn al-Muraḥḥal (d. 699/1300) and members of the Banū l-Munāṣif family rendered a variety of works into verse.

Educational needs also led authors to produce summarized version of longer texts. This is the case of Ibn al-Qurṭubī al-Mālaqī (556/1161–611/1214), who composed an exhaustive work on prosody (Rodríguez Figueroa 2006). Al-Washqī (ca. 560/1164–ca. 620/1223) is said to have been a specialist in summarizing prior works (Documentación 2012). These same needs gave rise to adaptations in order to satisfy the requirements of different readerships. The grammarian and lexicographer Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Mu’min b. Mūsà al-Qaysī, known as al-Sharīsī (557/1161 or 577/1181–619/1223), dedicated his *Sharḥ Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīrī* to the Almohad caliph al-Manṣūr, preparing three versions: a longer one discussing the literary meanings; a mid-length one containing a lexicography-based selection of the longer version; and a short one that merely discussed linguistic aspects. He wrote the mid-length version because the people of Sijilmāsa, whose native language was Berber, asked him for an easy-to-understand commentary (Borrego Soto 2011, p. 46). The structure is reminiscent of Averroes’ commentaries to Aristotle, which also involved three different types (Puig 2002, p. 16, 18). Umberto Bongianino has recently shown how the formal appearance of manuscripts changed considerably during the sixth/twelfth century. For instance, technical books on medicine, the natural sciences, grammar and lexicography began to include diagrams and tables. Moreover, colours began to be used extensively for chapter and entry headings, as well as for various other parts of the text, giving rise to a rich colour palette that is not to be found in the Islamic East (Bongianino 2017). All of this appears to have been done for educational purposes.

In the Almohad period one also finds a great interest in encyclopaedic works, the field to which the remaining two “bestsellers” belong: *Kitāb al-jāmi’ li-mufradāt al-adwīya wa-l-aghḍhiya* by Ibn al-Bayṭār and *al-Jāmi’ li-ahkām al-Qur’ān* by al-Qurṭubī (Fierro 2009). In the case of these two authors, as with al-Shāṭibī and Ibn Mālik, the fact that they immigrated to the Middle East clearly helped their works reach the entire Islamic world, not to belittle their skill as authors or the intrinsic value of their works. Still, it is worth asking whether they would have enjoyed the

same degree of success had their authors never left al-Andalus. The case of Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s book on the Prophet makes clear that it was at least possible: Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ never left the Islamic West and yet, of the works examined here, his reached the broadest readership and had the greatest impact by far. In the case of *Urjūzat al-wildān*, its subject matter would have made it a less likely candidate for such great success. Since it offers a Mālikī perspective on the fundamental obligations of Muslims, its impact would have been limited outside the context of the author’s legal school.

## 2.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Of the rich literary output produced in al-Andalus, ten works have been identified here for the first time as having enjoyed especially widespread circulation, based on the number of extant manuscripts (more than 40, with some reaching much higher figures). Six of these works were written during the sixth/twelfth–seventh/thirteenth centuries, that is, during the period when al-Andalus was part of the Almoravid and Almohad empires. What characterizes three of them—*Urjūzat al-wildān*, *Ḥirz al-amānī* by al-Shāḥibī (538/1143–590/1194) and *al-Alfiyya* by Ibn Mālik (d. 672/1274)—is their didactic character, as versified treatises meant to help students learn. The other three share a common encyclopaedic character: *al-Shifā* by Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ (d. 544/1149) on the prerogatives and special characteristics of the Prophet, *Kitāb al-jāmi’ li-mufradāt al-adwiya wa-l-aghdbhiya* by Ibn al-Bayṭār (576/1180 or 583/1187–646/1248) on medicinal simples, and *al-Jāmi’ li-ahkām al-Qur’ān* by al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273) on Qur’ānic exegesis. As we have seen, it was these characteristics (didacticism and encyclopaedism) that made them attractive to audiences outside al-Andalus. In some cases it was precisely the need to address non-local audiences that determined their character, especially when the author had emigrated from al-Andalus to the *Mashriq* and needed to secure his livelihood. The skill of these Andalusi authors at successfully writing didactic and encyclopaedic works can largely be traced back to the educational developments that took place during the Almohad caliphate, which intensified the demand for this type of compositions. To understand the impact that Andalusi literary production had on the rest of the Islamic world, we must start by contextualizing it in order to uncover the religious, social and political needs that lie behind it.

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# *Spolia* and Classical Revivals in Legitimacy Discourses: From Cordoba to the Mamluk Mosques of Cairo

*Susana Calvo Capilla*

## 3.1 STRATEGIES AND SOURCES OF SELF-AFFIRMATION IN AL-ANDALUS IN THE TENTH CENTURY

### 3.1.1 *Continuity and Rupture from the Eighth to the Tenth Century*

During the first century of the Umayyad Emirate of Cordoba, the emirs undertook the construction of Friday Mosques and new infrastructures in

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This study is part of a project funded by the Spanish State Plan for Scientific and Technical Research and Innovation: “Al-Andalus, art, science and contexts in an open Mediterranean. From the West to Egypt and Syria” (RTI2018-093880-B-I00). I thank Andrea da Motta for her help with the translation.

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© The Author(s) 2021  
M. Marcos Cobaleda (ed.), *Artistic and Cultural Dialogues in the Late Medieval Mediterranean*, Mediterranean Perspectives,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53366-3\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53366-3_3)

the provincial capitals. In these buildings, Roman and Hispano-Visigoth shafts, bases, capitals, and shell-niches were used. At that time, the use of *spolia* could also be found with a very similar function in the Carolingian Empire and the Kingdom of Asturias. They answered an analogous purpose of legitimising imperial power: Charlemagne sought materials in Rome, Ravenna and Jerusalem for his palace in Aachen, in an act of *translatio* or *renouatio Romae* (Brenk 1987).

In the Great Mosque of Cordoba, the capital's Friday Mosque, this kind of materials was placed both at the foundation stage and the first enlargement, started by 'Abd al-Raḥmān II (d. 852) in 848. As in the Alcazaba of Merida, also an official building ordered by the same emir in 835, the use of *spolia* comes within what Settis called *continuitá*, or survival (Settis 1986). The columns and ancient materials are prestigious items conferring the *auctoritas* of Antiquity to the building as a way of endorsing the emir's authority, which was of enormous importance in both cities: Merida, considered the great capital of Roman Hispania, and Cordoba, the capital of al-Andalus. In this sense, as Guidetti has recently pointed out, special sacrality was conferred by the columns of the churches when transferred to mosques (Guidetti 2016).

As the study by Antonio Peña has found, the scarcity of recyclable materials in Cordoba, where the large imperial monuments had already been dismantled in the fourth and fifth centuries, must have led the emir's architects to content themselves with secondary and domestic materials or to seek for pieces out of the city (Peña 2010). It is worth noting that the ruler was the only one with the prerogative of recovering these materials. Materials of a similar colour, size and shape were collected and arranged respecting their original function, without detriment to classical architectural syntax. Therefore, pilasters were used as jambs, columns were used to support series of arches, and shell-niches were intended to mark a "commemorative" place like the *miḥrāb* (in Merida but also probably in Cordoba and elsewhere). These pieces were always disposed in a symmetrical layout as seen in the *qibla* of the emir's extension. Moreover, this classical survival can also be found in the four Corinthian capitals and bases made for the extension's *miḥrāb* (now visible in the caliphal niche) by the sculptors of 'Abd al-Raḥmān II.

The reuse of classical *spolia* in the tenth century seems to be a different phenomenon. These are not the same architectural pieces as for the mosque, but Roman sarcophagi with reliefs and statues for a palace. They have been appearing since the first archaeological digs undertaken by

Ricardo Velázquez Bosco, at the start of the twentieth century, until today, in several buildings of Maḍīnat al-Zahrā', the palace-city founded by the first caliph, 'Abd al-Rahmān III (d. 961) about 936. Indeed, all the sarcophagi have openings on the bases and sides, as well as new carvings on the upper edges to adapt them to their later use as basins and fountains (Calvo Capilla 2012; Calvo Capilla 2014).

It is difficult to establish whether these Roman sculptures and reliefs originally came from Cordoba. The enormous expansion of Cordoba during the caliphal period, while a new palace-city (Maḍīnat al-Zahrā') was being built, may suggest that they were uncovered during the development of the new Western and Northern suburban neighbourhoods, some of which were built on the site of a Roman necropolis. The abundance and use of *spolia* was probably intimately related with the periods of urban expansion (Grabar 2001; Greenhalgh 2008; Guidetti 2016). But from the unusual abundance of pieces in Cordoba and their extraordinary quality, we may also assume that the Muslims might have brought Roman sarcophagi from other Roman capitals such as Seville or Merida, or, more unlikely, from beyond the Iberian Peninsula (Calvo Capilla 2012).

This collection of Roman sculptures displayed in the caliphal palace of Maḍīnat al-Zahrā' is what has led me to rethink the reasons why materials from Classical times were reused in Islamic architecture and the role played by Antiquity in the construction of al-Andalus.

### 3.1.2 *The Written Sources: An "Illustrated History"*

The reports on appreciation of ruins and materials from the past are rather more than general *topoi*. Preserved historical texts from al-Andalus, mostly written during the caliphate era, provide a theoretical framework in which such reports started making sense. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Rāzī (d. post 961) started his *Ta'rīj mulūk al-Andalus (History of the Kings of al-Andalus)* with Hercules, the first "Greek" king of the peninsula, followed by Romans and Visigoths. To illustrate and enrich the bare historical facts gathered, he generally includes in the narrative references to the monuments raised. While it is true that his words of admiration for the faded beauty of the ruins could be considered a literary *cliché* which also appears in eastern Arabic texts (Picard 1996, p. 105–116; Rubiera 1988, p. 27–68), al-Rāzī provides precise details implying knowledge about what is described. In fact, he gives a description of the peninsula mentioning the ancient origin of its cities and establishes a difference between the

Roman monuments of Seville and Merida, and the Roman and Visigothic heritage in Toledo (Calvo-Capilla 2012, p. 132–34).

In my view, the historians at the service of the Umayyad dynasty partially outlined the theoretical discourse upholding the use of *spolia* in the tenth-century monuments. Chroniclers, such as Aḥmad al-Rāzī and Ishaq b. Salama, were commissioned by al-Ḥakam II (d. 976) to write a history of al-Andalus. They composed a continuous historical discourse that could be called “integrator”, stating the continuity from Antiquity to al-Andalus, from the Roman emperors to the Visigoth kings, and from these to the Umayyad emirs and caliphs. To do this they had at their disposal important Latin historical sources, such as *Etymologiae* and *De Natura Rerum* by San Isidoro of Seville, and the *Book of Orosio*, the *Historiae adversus paganos* translated into Arabic.

The most relevant point of their narrative is not the misinterpretations (mythological figures became historical characters), but the fact that they did a continuous and coherent reading of the history of the peninsula. In my opinion, by including these data about the ruins of the past, they are not praising the conquest and the victory of Islam over the infidels. Quite the contrary, the assimilation of the Hispanic Roman and Visigoth legacy allowed the Umayyads of Cordoba to create a corpus of Andalusi knowledge and, consequently, a national and independent identity that served to legitimate their assumption of the emir and the caliphal titles. As Daniel Konig summarised, the

Roman and Visigothic past had become part of a regional collective memory that was specifically ‘Andalusi’. (Konig 2015, p. 165–66)

As I have addressed in previous works, the Umayyads of Cordoba adopted an old and well-known instrument of self-affirmation. In fact, collecting books, building huge libraries and surrounding themselves by scholars of ancient sciences were part of a legitimation policy developed by rulers since Classical Antiquity and naturally assumed by Muslim rulers. Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ (d. 544/1149) gave a specific name to the set of scientific activities taking place in the palatine library of Cordoba during the Caliphate: *bayt al-ḥikma*, the same name that Abbasids gave to their House of Wisdom in Baghdad (Calvo Capilla 2018).

This phenomenon of recovering Antiquity prompted by the Caliphal court explains why reliefs and Roman sculptures were properly accepted and understood in Maḍīnat al-Zahrā’ and some of the features introduced

in the enlargement of the Great Mosque of Cordoba commissioned by al-Ḥakam II in 961. Architects adopted the basilical aulic model (three naves) previously used in the reception halls (*maʿyilis*) of Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ, monumentalised through domes at both ends (in the *maqṣūra* and the access). The Andalusī caliphs recovered that way the Roman tradition of ceremonial space, used for the cult of the sovereign that the Oriental Umayyads had introduced before in their palaces (Calvo-Capilla 2017). It was a consciously historicising structure and constitutes a clear example of transfer between the secular and the religious architecture, very frequent in the early Umayyad art. As mentioned by Rabbat in the case of Mamluk Cairo, they

politicised the religious and sanctified the political to create and disseminate a powerful set of images and messages. (Rabbat 2015, p. 102)

In addition, the mosaic technique of golden glass tesserae, the imperial and sacred emblem *par excellence* in the Byzantine realm and in the Caliphal Golden Age (the Umayyad and Abbasid periods), was revived in the peninsula to decorate both the *qibla* of the Mosque of Cordoba and some of the palaces of Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ (Calvo Capilla 2008). This legitimisation strategy visible in al-Andalus, especially during the tenth century in Cordoba, presents similar principles to the one used, centuries later, in the Mamluk architecture in Cairo. Faced with similar needs of justification, the Mamluk sultan adopted resembling historicist formulas, recovering architectural prototypes and visual forms from the same places, Damascus and Jerusalem.

### 3.2 CLASSIC MOSQUES FOR MAMLUK SULTANS IN CAIRO: FROM BAYBARŞ TO AL-NĀŞİR

Between 1266 and 1269, Sultan al-Zāhir Baybarş al-Bunduqdārī (r. 1260–1277) built an enormous Great Mosque in the Northern part of the city of al-Qāhira. It was the first one erected after the return of Sunnism to the capital of Egypt. Baybarş became a mythical figure in the Islamic World as demonstrated by the romance *Sirat al-Malik al-Zahir Baybars*, a long Egyptian folkloric epic poem that narrates his life and heroic feats (Bohas and Hassan 2000–2018). Its fame expanded also across the Christian lands: its relationship with Alfonso X is well known, with whom he exchanged embassies, as can be seen in the *Cantigas* (Martínez Montávez

1962; Calvo Capilla 2014). The reign of Baybars marked the start of the Mamluk period in Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean. He engaged in a combination of diplomacy and military expansion, reason for which he was remembered as the second great conqueror of the territories in the hands of the Crusaders after Saladin (Tourau 1992) (Fig. 3.1).

Baybars, a Mamluk slave of the last Ayyubid sultan al-Malik al-Şālih, was self-proclaimed sultan and placed himself under the protection of a fictitious Abbasid Caliphate. After the entrance of the Mongols in Baghdad in 1258, the survivor members of the Abbasid family were taken to Cairo, where the Caliphate was restored. The two first Abbasid Caliphs under the Mamluk protection, al-Mustaşir billāh (1261–62) and al-Ĥākim bi-Amr Allāh (1262–1302), delegated full authority as *amīr al-mu'minīn* to the Mamluk emir Baybars, legitimising his rule as sultan and granting him legal and moral authority (Holt 1984). As a result, Baybars claimed authority over all the Ayyubid lands (Aleppo, Damascus and Jerusalem), recovering the cities that were still in the hands of the Latins, such as Jaffa or Bethlehem, apart from Egypt and Yemen. He also took control and assumed the protection of the sacred cities, Medina and Mecca. In fact, he is the first ruler, according to al-Maqrīzī, who, assuming the caliphal prerogative, dispatched the *mahmal* (the ceremonial palanquin) with the *kiswa* (the covering of the Ka'ba) from Cairo to Mecca in 664/1266 (Taragan 2000, p. 32).

The importance of Sultan Baybars is reflected in the titles that accompany his name in the inscriptions of his multiple religious foundations in Syria, Palestine and Egypt. As studied by Aigle, some of the nicknames or *laqab* received by Baybars in the inscriptions appear in the mirror for princes to identify an ideal ruler, such as *al-'ādil*, “the just”, and *al-'ālim*, “the sage”. In some inscriptions he is even called *Iskandar al-zamān şāhib al-qirān*, “Alexander of [his] time” and “Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction”, a title that had been previously used in Hellenic and Roman Antiquity (Aigle 2003, 2014; Eddé 2012).

Baybars chose for the construction of the new Great Mosque a large space used as *maydān* (polo ground) that was located in the Northern suburb of al-Qāhira called al-Ĥusaynīya, not far from the Fatimid Mosque of al-Ĥākim and Bāb al-Futūh. Saladin and the Ayyubid sultan, followers of the *Şhafi'i* law school, only allowed the construction of one mosque for the *khutba* in Cairo: the Fatimid Mosque of al-Ĥākim (1173). Baybars,

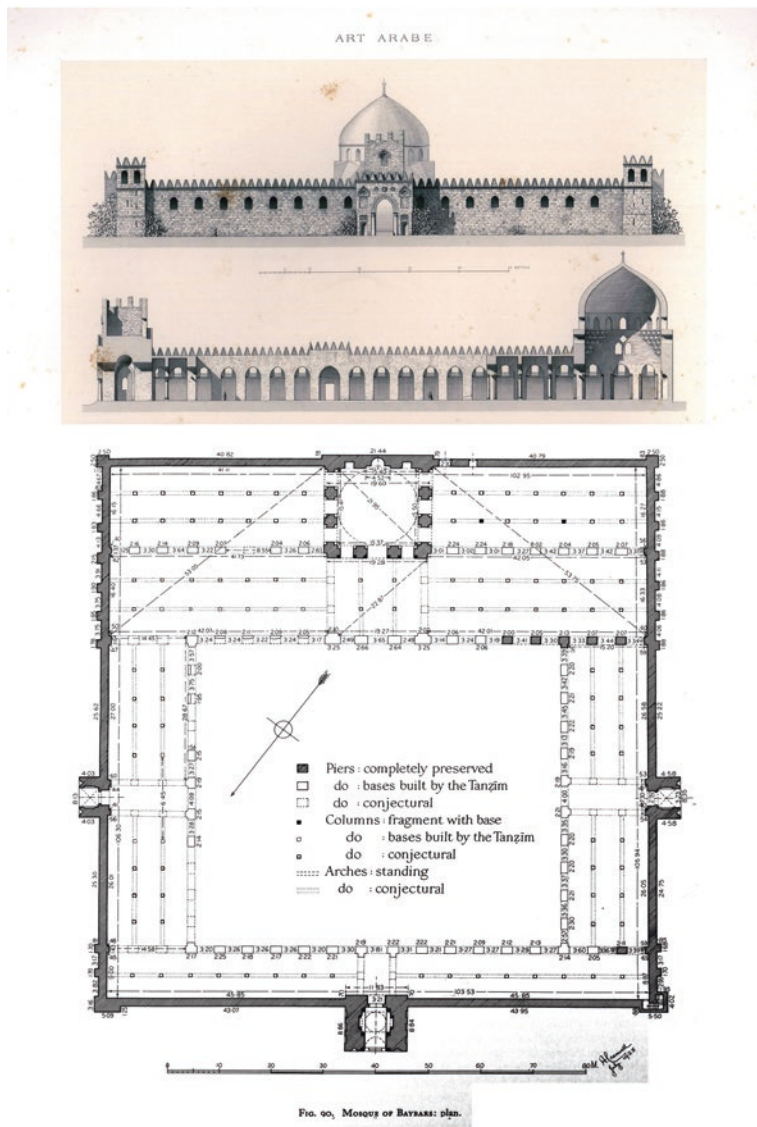


Fig. 3.1 Mosque of Sultan al-Zāhir Baybars, Cairo. (a) Elevation and section after Prisse d’Avennes 1869–1877. (b) Floor plan after Creswell (1978)



from the more permissive *Hanafī* school, ordered to open the closed ones and built a new mosque that would take his name (O’Kane 2017).

The ground plan of the mosque, chosen by the sultan himself according to the chroniclers, was a declaration of intent, since it recovered the most classical hypostyle, exceptional in Cairo at that time as have demonstrated the specialists (Meinecke 1985; Behrens-Abouseif 2007). In addition, the structure resumed and monumentalised another series of characteristics clearly inspired in the Umayyad Mosque of Damascus and the Syrian architecture (not necessarily Umayyad), such as the axial nave and the dome set in front of the *mihṛāb* (*maqṣūra*). Placing the minaret above the northern door of the mosque, aligned with the *mihṛāb*, like in the Great Mosque of Damascus, was also something exceptional.<sup>1</sup> According to al-Maqrīzī, pieces of wood and marble *spolia* from the citadel of Jaffa were used in the construction of the great *qubba*, which connected the building with the conquests of the founder, who could this way show his status as unique ruler (Sherif 1988) (Fig. 3.2b).

Creswell and other authors suggest an Egyptian model, the main features of which follow, for instance, those of the Fatimid Mosque of al-Ḥākim: the towers in the corners, the monumental portals and stepped merlons, elements also used in Umayyad mosques (Creswell 1978; Meinecke 1992; Korn 2006). Similarly, they have also found parallels for the plan in the twelfth century Ilkhanid and Anatolian Mosques that would follow the model of the Friday Mosque of Iṣfahān, where the Seljuq sultan inserted a dome into the hypostyle prayer hall in the late eleventh century (Creswell 1978; Meinecke 1985; Bloom 1982; Behrens-Abouseif 2007; O’Kane 2017; Keser-Kayaalp and Wheatley-Irving 2017). Nevertheless, the projecting monumental portals incorporated multiple significant stylistic features from the Syrian architecture, both Islamic and of the Crusaders, such as the striped masonry (*ablaq*), the cushion voussoirs and zigzag decoration, and a *muqarnaṣ* vault, intended, according to some researchers, to symbolise Baybars’ triumphs over the Crusaders (Bloom 1982; Taragan 2006) (Fig. 3.2c).

The space of the *maqṣūra* was decorated with marbles and mosaics that even seemed to imitate the thematic of the ones from Damascus: trees and buildings. According to Ibn Shaddād, a contemporary author of Baybars, the dome had

<sup>1</sup>All three portals probably had minarets as recently proposed by Behrens Abouseif (2007: 124).

lavish decorations and materials [...] it was carried on sixteen columns and decorated with gold, lapis lazuli paint and faience. (*Tarikh al-Malik al-Zahir*: Sherif 1988, p. 54–55)

Today the building is under reconstruction after having seen many vicissitudes following its ruin (Fig. 3.2a and b).

In short, the specialists have dissected each one of the elements that shape the mosque plan and decoration to discern their origin. Here, I prefer to consider it as a whole, as an imposing and emblematic building. One of the most remarkable aspects of the hypostyle plan of the Baybars



**Fig. 3.2** Mosque of Sultan al-Zāhir Baybars, Cairo, in its state in 2019. (a) Epigraphic decoration and window. (b) Interior of the *maqṣūra*. (c) North-eastern gateway. (d) North face of the *maqṣūra* with the springing of four arches of the triple aisle basilica leading to the courtyard (Photos by the author)

mosque is that the connection of the great dome facing the *miḥrāb* with the courtyard is done, not through a nave, as usual, but through an elevated triple aisle. The dome covers a bay resulting from the intersection of three naves (Creswell 1978). This central structure is elevated, almost independently from the rest of the prayer hall consisting of six aisles running parallel to the *qibla* wall and separated by arcades on columns. The Mamluk chroniclers al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Shaddād indicate that the sultan took as a model the enormous wooden dome of the Ayyubid Mausoleum of the Imām al-Shāfi‘ī (1211), and compare the building with the Umayyad Mosque of ‘Amr, both Sunnī monuments in Cairo (Sherif 1988) (Fig. 3.2d).

This configuration of an axial basilica with dome, flanked by transverse aisles, points to the classical hypostyle type associated with the Golden Age of the caliphate, that is, with the Umayyad and Abbasid mosques. Some scholars have noted that it would constitute a strong reminder of the resurgence of Sunnism in Egypt. Actually, the origin of the complex structure of the first Mamluk Great Mosque seems to be found, first, in the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, where the Seljuq dome (Blair 1991) is placed over a large axial aisle that has a monumental classic façade formed by three arches and a pediment.<sup>2</sup> But in Cairo, the structure was further complicated, so that the *maqṣūra* and its access from the courtyard are, in fact, a basilical space of three naves (the central aisle was higher) with a great dome on the chevet. This is a meaningful association of structures that remind us the models of the Christian architecture of the fourth and fifth centuries in the area of Syria and Palestine, in particular the combination *martyrium-basilica* from the Constantinian Age onwards (Fig. 3.3).

Let us remember the churches of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, or Saint Simeon Stylites (*Qal‘at Sim‘ān*), as well as other sanctuaries that Baybarṣ may have visited himself during his travels across the region, through conquest and construction campaigns (Frenkel 2001; Thorau 1992; Troadec 2014–2015).<sup>3</sup> For example, the Constantinian Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, a place venerated by the Muslims, had a five-aisle basilica with a chevet in the form of *martyrium* that had been

<sup>2</sup>In Mamluk time the Umayyad Mosque should look like in the Anonym picture (circle of Gentile Bellini), *Reception of the Venetian Ambassadors in Damascus*, ca. 1511 (Museum of Louvre, Inv. 100).

<sup>3</sup>These authors studied the legitimising strategy of Baybarṣ in Syria expressed through the construction and restoration of a large number of monuments.



**Fig. 3.3** Umayyad Mosque of Damascus from the courtyard (Photo by the author)

reconstructed in the sixth century by Justinian. Between 1161 and 1169, the central nave had been decorated with glass mosaics, clearly inspired in the Umayyad Mosque of Damascus. According to the Venetian Marino Sanudo (d. 1338), Baybars would have destroyed the *monasterium* of Bethlehem and taken to Cairo some of the marble and columns from the church in 1263 (Sanudo Torsello 2011, p. 351, 411–412; Pringle 1993; Hourihane 2012). This combination of *martyrium/rotonda* and *basilica* of the Holy Sepulchre was reviewed in the eighth century with the construction of *al-Masjid al-Aqṣā* next to the Dome of the Rock on the *al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf*, the “Noble Sanctuary” of Jerusalem, as shown by Grabar (2006, p. 24–26) and Hillenbrand (1994, p. 74) (Nees 2016).

Hence, not only was al-Zāhir Baybars inspired by the Umayyad monuments, but also his architects reviewed a sacred formula present in the Syrian-Palestine area in a case of copy of the architectural iconography like the ones studied by Krautheimer. In his classic study, he concluded that

the models were never imitated in toto; on the contrary, copies were defined by

the disintegration of the prototype into its single elements, the selective transfer of these parts, and their reshuffling in the copy. (Krautheimer 1942, p.13–14)

There was often a tenuous visual link between a model and its copies, a connection that was probably evident in the Medieval Ages but not always readily apparent in the present days. In Cairo, the selective transfer would explain the free use of numbers and measurements in a completely new context.

The link of Baybars with Syria, where he spent most of his life, is a well-known theme (Frenkel 2001; Troadec 2014–2015; Banister 2014–2015; and Thorau 1992). He had a palace in Damascus, *Qaṣr al-ablaq*, where the Mamluk sultans would be lodged from that time. Among his outstanding actions in those lands, are the restoration works of the most emblematic Umayyad buildings: the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (1261 and 1294–1296), the Great Umayyad Mosque in Damascus (1269–1270) and the al-Aqṣā Mosque (1269), in which he invested large sums of money; never after their construction had that much attention paid to them. He also restored the Seljuq dome and the mosaics of the Umayyad Mosque of Damascus. The exterior mosaics of the Dome of the Rock and the decoration of the *Qubbat al-Silsila* were also recovered under his rule (Nees 2016, p. 66–68). Those works marked the revival of the glass mosaic decoration techniques and workshops, used in several Mamluk buildings in Syria and Egypt, between the end of the thirteenth century and the first half of the fourteenth century (Meinecke 1992; Flood 1997; Kenney 2006). With his death, in 1277, Baybars was buried in his Damascene mausoleum in the madrasa al-Zāhiriyya, located near the Umayyad Mosque and the Saladin Mausoleum. Baybars' mausoleum, finished by his son, was decorated with glass mosaics inspired in those of the Umayyad Great Mosque. The following Mamluk sultan to intervene in the buildings in Jerusalem—the Dome of the Rock (in 1318–1319) and the al-Aqṣā Mosque (in 1329)—and in the Damascus Mosque (in 1328–1329) was Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn (d. 1341), of whom we will talk next.

The glass golden mosaics had been an imperial-caliphal emblem of great significance, used in the Umayyad and Abbasid Mosques, as indicate

the rests found in Samarra by Herzfeld (Schibille et al. 2018). This would certainly be the main reason for which they were recovered by Baybars for his monuments, the mind behind the restoration of the Caliphate. There were probably mosaics also in his *madrassa* in Cairo, built in 1262–1263, as well as in the *Qubba al-Zāhiriyya*, palace erected by the sultan in the Citadel, both now disappeared. The mosaics in this *Qubba* showed figurative scenes where the Sultan and the Emirs appeared in procession, as well as war scenes and *furūsiyya* exercises (Rabbat 2012; Abdulfattah and Sakr 2012). As Kenney argued, Mamluk glass mosaic was a medium rich in historical value and message-bearing potential, reason for which it was used in a deliberate way “to communicate polyvalent ideas and connotations” (Kenney 2006, p. 200). Glass mosaics were a historicist language used in the construction of the legitimisation of Baybars’ authority.

Finally, the election of a classical hypostyle design mosque with a domed *maqṣūra* could have also been related to the ceremonial function of the mosque. In the building inscriptions, Baybars receives for the first time the title of “the one who ordered to take an oath to the two caliphs” (*āmīr bi-bay‘at al-jalīfatayn*), a very meaningful formulation, referring to the two Abbasid caliphs mentioned earlier (Aigle 2003, p. 65). According to Peter Thorau, the Abbasid caliph settled in Cairo, al-Ḥākim, took care of pronouncing the first and the second *khutba* in that new Friday Mosque (Thorau 1992, p. 108), which means that it was conceived as a space of special political and religious significance. The Abbasid caliphs were “used” by Mamluk sultans to lend religious sanction to official ceremonies (Steenbergen 2013; Banister 2014–2015). The importance of the Friday prayers in which Baybars participated together with the Abbasid Caliph is underlined by what happened on a Friday of 1261 (659H), before the arrival to Cairo, when Baybars and the Caliph al-Mustaṣir made separate grand entrances at the Umayyad Great Mosque of Damascus to attend the *khutba* and the prayers together (Hassan 2018, p. 76). The authority of a universal caliphate legitimised the Mamluk sultanate as a classical Islamic state.

In 1335, during his third mandate, the Mamluk sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (d. 1341), designated “the wise”, ordered the reconstruction of the Friday Mosque of the Cairo Citadel (erected in 1318). While it is true that under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, with the Mamluk economy flourishing and the population expanding, a great number of mosques were built in the city, the one built in the Citadel was outstanding. Just like the great reception hall, the Great *Iwān* al-Nāṣir (started two



Fig. 3.4 Mosque of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in the Citadel, Cairo. (a) Courtyard. (b) *Maqṣūra* (Photos by the author)

years earlier), the mosque stood out for its great green dome, a clear allusion to the famous *qubbat al-khaḍrā'* of Damascus and Baghdad, as well as the *ablaq* walls finished with a stepped crenellation in the court (Rabbat 1995). The scenography of both monuments played with the urban environment: the dome of the mosque was visible from the East, from the cemeteries of the *qibli* side, while the *Iwān* was elevated on the *mayḍān* and the city. The mosque has a domed *maqṣūra* taking up the space of nine bays in the hypostyle plan, similar to Baybars' mosque, even though it lacks the axial basilica. They share other features: a minaret on top of the projecting entrance portal, in the northern side, and lacks *tirāz* epigraphic bands on the exterior walls. This was not the only building inspired in Baybars: in 1313–1314 the Citadel *Qaṣr al-Ablaq* was built, which copied, fifty years later, the one from Damascus (Fig. 3.4a,b).

The characteristic that has drawn our attention in the mosque and in the great hall of the Citadel, both erected by al-Nāṣir, was that their domed central space was held by giant red granite columns (Aswan granite) brought from Pharaonic or Ptolemaic ruins in Egypt (the exact origin varies depending on the source). Up to thirty-two columns were used in the Citadel by the architects of al-Nāṣir (Behrens-Abouseif 2007, 2014; Rabbat 1995, p. 37–38, 266–267). The presence of these spectacular *spolia* materials was most likely linked to a legitimising Mamluk discourse previously used by his father at the Qalāwūn's Complex of *Bayn al-Qaṣrayn*.

And here again appears a parallelism with the Umayyad buildings from the Syrian-Palestine area (Fig. 3.4b).

In the Qalāwūn's Complex (1283–1284), the combination of a *madrassa*, a hospital, and a mausoleum, the dome with ambulatory of the mausoleum, as has been often noted, copies the Dome of the Rock of Jerusalem, and just like there, it lies on giant reused columns, in red granite. The *madrassa* mosque, located in the *Iwān qibli* (or south), almost in parallel with the mausoleum, is a three-nave basilica, also held by large reused shafts. There, the use of *spolia* material and ornamental Umayyad devices, glass mosaics, marble and *karma* (vine scrolls), both so significant in the prayer hall of the Great Mosque of Damascus (Flood 1997), reinforce the symbolic character obtained by the basilical model in this early Mamluk period.

Hence, and similarly to the Baybarṣ Mosque, the Sultan al-Nāṣir's Mosque in the Citadel brings together two features clearly associated with the mosques of the classical period: the hypostyle plan with dome and the *spolia* columns from Ancient Egypt, red granite shafts from Pharaonic, Ptolemaic, and Roman buildings.

It is worth noting those Pharaonic columns placed in a privileged environment of one of the most important buildings in the city, holding the domes of the Justice Hall or Great *Iwān* and the Friday Mosque of the Citadel. In my opinion, this reutilisation was neither accidental, nor marginal, nor devoid of meaning (Greenhalgh 2008, p. 458–64). It could not have been only a question of cost (it actually took a great effort to take those materials to Cairo) or technical inferiority. Neither is the apotropaic character view defensible, as it was probably the case for other Pharaonic materials used for the construction of the Fatimid buildings or as lintels and thresholds in the Circassian Mamluk Mosques (Barrucand 2002; Behrens-Abouseif 2014, p. 408–09).<sup>4</sup>

As Flood (2011), Guidetti (2016), and other scholars have recently studied, the reused elements in Medieval Islamic architecture had multiple layers of meaning. In this particular case, these are clearly conscious choices of materials from Ancient Egypt, which needs further explanations. Pharaonic shafts were chosen to hold the monumental domes (instead of pillars, like in the al-Zāhir Mosque), in addition to smaller size columns, probably coming from churches, for the rest of the mosque naves.

<sup>4</sup>About magical associations, see Gonnella (2010).



In 1980, Haarmann talked about a “regional sentiment in medieval Islamic Egypt” and defended that, among Muslim and Coptic Egyptians, in Medieval Egypt, the texts reflect arousal of a national feeling (*shu‘ūbiyya*) that brought them to value their past as singular (Haarmann 1980). Pharaonic history and monuments were introduced in the Islamic history of the territory, even though the popular culture considered them as magical and apotropaic; in fact, they were periodically destroyed.<sup>5</sup> Sijpesteijn (2011) identified, in the ninth century, the period under the Tulunids rule, as the moment in which Egyptians (Muslim Arabs and Copts) felt the need to revendicate an identity of their own and different from the rest of the Islam territories, as well as to forge their own Egyptian history. And the pre-Islamic monumental heritage was essential to the latter.

The use of ancient materials coming from different places across Egypt (Ptolemaic, Pharaonic, Roman and Late Antiquity) appears to be a clear case of self-conscious historicity, “tacit recognitions of earlier chapters of the site’s biography” (Yasin 2016, p. 236). By appropriating these visually recognisable Egyptian materials and re-installing them in visible places of their political sceneries, the Mamluk sultan assumed a discourse of continuity with the prestigious past of that territory, with the long history of the lands of Egypt. The monumentality of the Mamluk buildings, stone buildings of large dimensions, could also be considered an attempt of visual association with the Pharaonic, Ptolemaic, and Roman patrimony of Egypt. In fact, according to Rabbat, the perception of the Mamluk sources was of

praising the monumentality of their patrons’ buildings was at times coupled with downplaying the monumentality of those of other sovereigns. (Rabbat 2002, p. 160–61; O’Kane 1996)

In parallel, resorting to the architectural revival of the first caliphs, typology, mosaics, and ornamentation, Sultan al-Nāṣir established a political and religious connection with the Umayyad past (“symbol of continuity and stability”, according to Flood 1997) and with the founder of the Mamluk sultanate, the hero, Baybars. All of this constituted a visual proclamation of the legitimacy of the power of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn, who was so questioned at the beginning (he was ousted in two occasions, in 1294 and 1309).

<sup>5</sup> See also Cannuyer (1999); Mathews (2004). An opposite view in Cook (1983).

Mamluks claimed, through the sources, to be the restorers of a Golden Age that, in their collective memory, lay in the Umayyad Caliphate (Rabbat 2002). The Mamluk state recovered some of the signs of glory of that Golden Age: they had ousted the Crusaders from the Middle East and had stopped the Mongols; they controlled all of the territory of Bilad al-Sham, the Syrian-Egyptian territories; they had restored Sunnism; and had “invented” a new caliphal legitimacy by installing the Abbasid Caliph in Cairo. The Mamluk historical sources recovered the pan-Islamic spirit of the historians from the eighth and ninth centuries, who lived, at least in theory, in a unified Islamic world. Hence, and in the light of the present analysis, we will conclude with Rabbat’s words:

[the] visual references to the venerated monuments of the early Islamic period which do the early Mamluk architecture and sources (at the time of Baybars, Qalāwūn and his sons) embody and reinforce the rekindled Mamluk sense of historical continuity and represent a conscious effort to give it shape. (Rabbat 2002, p. 162)

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PART II

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Andalusi Legacy in Medieval  
Christian Art





# Visual Traits of Otherness: Figurative Resources Used in the Depiction of Muslims in Mediterranean Romanesque Sculpture

*Inés Monteiro*

The earliest images of Muslims recorded in Christian art in the West appear in the tenth century in the illuminated manuscripts known as *Beatus*, which are copies of the *Commentary on the Apocalypse* written by Beatus of Liébana. One of the most recognizable is the famous Islamic rider of the Girona *Beatus* (975, fol. 134v., Museu de la Catedral de Girona, no. inv. 7), studied by O. K. Werckmeister (1997, p. 10–16). The rider's dress, turban, and short stirrups are the same as those worn in al-Andalus in the tenth century and, as such, are reflected in caliphal art. Here the image takes on a negative connotation because it is almost identical to that of Herod in the same manuscript.<sup>1</sup> This codex was illuminated

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<sup>1</sup> Herod appears in fol. 15v. Although Werckmeister's thesis has raised doubts about some concrete aspects such as the positive interpretation of the serpent, his work offers very solid

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M. Marcos Cobaleda (ed.), *Artistic and Cultural Dialogues in the Late Medieval Mediterranean*, Mediterranean Perspectives,

[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53366-3\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53366-3_4)

in the monastery of San Salvador de Tábara (Zamora) by Christian monks who had fled from al-Andalus, which explains the polemical context of confrontation that is seen in this illustration as a reflection of the ideological climate surrounding them.

Nevertheless, the allusions to Islam in the *Beatus* manuscripts are, for the most part, indirect. A good example of this is the illustration of Belshazzar's Feast in Morgan *Beatus* (fol. 202v, The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, MS 644), dating from the second-third of the tenth century, which has been studied by Williams and Dodds. The banquet scene is framed by a horseshoe arch with alternating red and white voussoirs like those in the Great Mosque of Cordoba. Thus, the comparison between ancient Babylonia and the Umayyad capital endows the biblical account with a contemporary political meaning (Williams 1980, p. 212–27; Dodds 1993, p. 33–34).

Other studies have uncovered references to Muslim power in that period, particularly in depictions of the Antichrist or the Apocalyptic Beast, in addition to several negative figures in the Old Testament (Sepúlveda 1979, p. 139–53; Stierlin 1983, p. 157; Dodds 1993, p. 27–37, Werckmeister 1997, p. 101–06; Williams 2004, p. 297–304; Franco 2007, p. 139–50). In this sense, the setting of certain scenes in the world of Muslim al-Andalus offers an updated reading of the biblical passages.<sup>2</sup> We also find the interpretation of the present as the fulfillment of the biblical prophecies in Spanish chronicles and other Latin texts of the period. In these works the Islamic conquest of Iberia is identified with the materialization of the apocalyptic signs, the Muslims are compared to the enemies of the Hebrews in the Old Testament and Muḥammad is the equivalent of the Antichrist (Flori 2007; Daniel 1993, p. 106–12).

Romanesque sculpture also contains a few metaphorical allusions to Muslims in the guise of biblical figures. This is the case of the famous image of Ismael with a turban in the Lamb tympanum of San Isidoro in León, so brilliantly analysed by John Williams as a reference to Islamic

arguments for the identification of this rider as an image of the Muslim “enemy” and, as such, his argument has been widely accepted by historians.

<sup>2</sup>An emblematic example is the depiction of the Whore of Babylon in various *Beatus*, where the female figure is seated cross-legged on a cushion and holds a cup similar to the way the caliph is represented in Andalusí art. Sometimes explicit details are added, such as the crescent moon on the crown of the figure, as in the *Beatus* of Fernando I, fol. 224v. See Sepúlveda (1979, p.140).

power in the peninsula at the beginning of the twelfth century (Williams 1977, p. 3–14).

We also find examples in Romanesque sculpture of specific images of Muslims which are unrelated to biblical parables. The rise of a profane iconography and scenes of combat in particular, enable us to state that it is in the twelfth century when the image of the Muslim takes on a more specific role in Western Christian art. The explanation for this iconographic phenomenon lies in the political context of the moment. In the second half of the eleventh century the popes began to promote the occupation of Islamic territory in the Iberian Peninsula and the Holy Land, and in order to do so, they developed an ideology of a holy war (Flori 2003; García-Fiz 2002). These military campaigns were perceived as acts of spiritual transcendence and, as such, their appearance was justified in the decoration of the temple. Even though several studies exist on the depiction of the Muslim in Romanesque sculpture, this field is open for further exploration and entails certain difficulties because of the symbolic nature of many of its representations (Lejeune and Stiennon 1971; Seidel 1981; Strickland 2003; Monteiro 2012a). The Romanesque image cannot be read in a literal sense due to the fact that many of its forms are graphic transpositions of moral values and the transcendental messages they wish to convey. Because these figures of monsters and beasts often symbolize human vices, their animalization and deformation constitute artistic ways of expressing moral degradation in visual terms (Wirth 1999, p. 366). The metaphorical meaning of these images often hinders the identification of scenes and characters, particularly when they do not illustrate biblical passages. Moreover, the frequent deterioration of the stone makes the reliefs even more illegible.

In order to compensate for these limitations and progress in our interpretation of Romanesque art, it would be useful to analyse the representative guidelines that are repeated in different scenes. This procedure has enabled art historians to decipher the meaning of specific figurative resources. In this regard, some works on gestures in the art of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries have been very useful. Studies by Garnier and Schmitt start from the analysis of a significant number of images to deduce, for example, that the unstable attitude of the figures and their excessive gesticulation denote fiercely negative and demonic temperaments (Garnier 1982, p. 120–22; Schmitt 1990, p. 128–40). These same procedures can also be applied to images of Muslims.

In this study, we have brought together several examples of twelfth-century sculpture in France, Italy and Spain in which iconographic and compositional procedures in common are used to depict Muslims. This will enable us, on the one hand, to try to decipher the meaning of these iconographic solutions and, on the other hand, to further our knowledge of the representation of religious otherness in the art of Mediterranean Christendom in the central centuries of the Middle Ages.

In the façade of the church at Oloron-Sainte-Marie (French Pyrenees), we find two figures of “Saracen” captives chained together in the trumeau and holding the weight of the church on their shoulders like classical Atlas. These figures, dating between 1115 and 1135, wear short tunics with a pearled fringe bordering the edge of their skirts. Their heads are covered with striped turbans and they wear slightly pointed sandals, in keeping with the typical costume of Muslims of that period (Arié 1990, p. 91–120). They are joined at the waist and ankles by chains, while their bulging eyes and open mouths have been mutilated by human hands. Ruth Bartal has shown that they represent the defeated Muslim enemy, bent under the weight of the religious edifice and symbolically subjugated to the power of the faith (Bartal 1987, p. 103).

Sénac pointed out that these captives commemorate the success of the First Crusade, and, more specifically, the participation of Gaston IV, Viscount of Béarn, who was a patron of this church (Sénac 2000, p. 65–66). The Viscount was also involved in the Christian conquest of Saragossa a few years before the erection of this portal, in 1118. The military defeat of the Muslims was interpreted in religious terms as a sign of the superiority of Christianity, an idea that coincides perfectly with the image of the captives crushed under the weight of the temple.

Another figure in this portal also attracts our attention. Located on the upper right side is a figure of a victorious knight whose horse’s hooves are trampling on a small gesticulating figure (see Fig. 4.1). The motif of the victorious rider is widespread in the French and Spanish Romanesque and has been interpreted in various ways by historians. Some have seen this figure as Constantine triumphant over the pagans, others as Charlemagne over the Muslims, and still others as a crusader, depending on the context (see Monteiro 2012b). The interpretation of this motif in Spanish Romanesque art has also been linked with the figure of St. James as *Moorslayer* or, more generally, as an image of the *miles Christi* triumphing over Islam (Ruiz Maldonado 1986). In the specific case of the knight at Oloron-Sainte-Marie, it is probably a direct reference to victory over



**Fig. 4.1** Victorious knight over a defeated Muslim, West portal of Sainte Marie Cathedral, Oloron-Sainte-Marie, Pyrénées Atlantiques, France, ca. 1115–1135. Photo: Inés Monteiro

contemporary Muslims and, as such, it reinforces the message of the trumeau of the portal. The beard and gesture of the defeated figure, whose tongue is hanging out, are typical traits of the *Sarracens* in the art of this period, although not exclusive to them. In this case, however, it is the interpretive context that leads us to the identification.

A few representations of a figure dominated by a victorious knight are clearly recognizable as Muslim. This is the case of a relief in the cloister of the cathedral of Tudela (Navarra, Spain), where the cross on the knight's shield and the turban of the defeated figure leave no doubt as to its meaning (see Fig. 4.2). Most of the time, however, the enemy does not have any identifying attributes, and the rider can be interpreted in a generic sense in relation to the chivalrous ideals of the world of feudalism.<sup>3</sup>

Although the image of the victorious knight is less frequent in Italian Romanesque art, there are a few examples of the visual procedure of

<sup>3</sup>The example from Tudela has been identified as St. George on top of a Muslim or Sancho VII at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212.



**Fig. 4.2** Victorious knight defeating a Muslim. Museo de Tudela, cloister of the cathedral of Tudela, Navarra, beginning of the thirteenth century. Photo: Inés Monteiro

placing one figure under another to symbolize the defeat of Islam. This can be seen in the famous Throne of Elia in the basilica of St. Nicholas in Bari, dating from 1098. The throne was commissioned by Pope Urban II, himself, when he came to Bari for a synod. Among the topics discussed was the First Crusade that was taking place at that time and had become a major project for this pope (Nees 1999, p. 773–82). The bishop’s throne is held up by three slaves similar to the atlantes at Oloron-Sainte-Marie. Although each figure is different, the one in the middle stands out because he wears a short skirt or caftan reminiscent of those worn by the captives in Oloron’s church in addition to shoes with pointed tips and a short cane or staff. A detailed study of the physiognomy of these figures by André Grabar concluded that they were North African slaves flanking a person of a higher rank, identified by his dress as an Arab or Seljuq Turk (Grabar 1954, p. 12). Although Grabar did not go into detail about the ideological implications of this iconography, other scholars have interpreted the throne within the context of Christian reaffirmation after the conquest of

Jerusalem by the crusaders in 1099, given that some of the expeditions sailed from the port of Bari (Verzár 1986, p. 290).

The presence of Muslim atlantes on the Bari Throne is not unique in southern Italian Romanesque art. At least one of the bearers underneath the tomb of Roger II of Sicily (d. 1154), in Palermo cathedral, appears to wear a turban and all of them wear short tunics. The sense of triumph over Islam that can be deduced from this figure is consistent with other works done for this Norman ruler such as his famous silk mantle.<sup>4</sup>

Both the defeated figures under the hoofs of the victorious knights and the Muslim atlantes of Oloron, Bari, and Palermo correspond to the same compositional pattern: a vertical type that transmits notions of inferiority, defeat, and submission by placing one figure under the weight of another which, in turn, embodies the idea of triumph or victory. This very old and universal representational scheme appears in the ancient art of the Middle East and is perpetuated in Imperial Rome.<sup>5</sup>

In the Christian world, the same compositional model has traditionally served to allude to the triumph of good over evil, as in the images of St. Michael and the devil and the Virgin and the serpent (Garnier 1982, p. 84, 85, 111). This representational procedure we have termed *the principle of verticality* has been widely applied throughout Christian iconography, and among its many contexts, it was successful in symbolically depicting the victory of Christianity over Islam. This is confirmed by the subsequent diffusion of the image of St. James the Moorslayer (*Santiago Matamoros*), which is directly governed by the principle of verticality. Although this iconography did not become completely defined until the fourteenth century, it is in debt to the depiction of the victorious Romanesque knight (Cabrillana 1999, p. 213).

The *principle of verticality*, then, is a compositional device of a generalized nature that transmits very effectively in visual terms the idea of a military and spiritual triumph over an enemy. In no way, however, does it serve as an indicator in itself of the existence of a message related to

<sup>4</sup>In which his conquests are symbolized by the figures of two lions trampling on several camels. The Mantle of Roger II, now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, was done between 1133 and 1134 in Palermo. See Ettinghausen and Harner (1964, p. 116–71).

<sup>5</sup>A good example can be found in Sassanid rock shelter art in the Valley of Naqw-i Rustan (Iran), where there is a relief of the Persian king Bahram II mounted on top of an enemy (before 293 CE). This iconography is usual in Roman art. At one time, the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius (153 CE) had a figure of the enemy beneath the horse; Musei Capitolini, Rome.

religious otherness. In the cases we have mentioned, it is the distinctive traits of the defeated figures themselves that allow us to identify them. These traits are mainly of two types: dress and physical characteristics. The short tunic or caftan, the turban or striped headdress, and the pointed slippers are some of the components typical of Andalusí, North African, and Near Eastern Islamic dress in the examples we have mentioned. In addition, facial features also make up an essential aspect of these identifications. As we have seen in the Bari Throne, André Grabar identified the two half-naked slaves as Africans, and more specifically as Ethiopians, particularly the one on the right, because of his curly hair arranged in ringlets (Grabar 1954, p. 12). Their broad nose and thick lips also identify them as Muslims coinciding, to a certain extent, with the ethnic type proper to North Africa and the Near East (Dorin 2008, p. 42–43).

The wide nose and thick lips are typical of the Muslims in illustrations of several early medieval French manuscripts, as well as the dark colour of their skin (Reynaud 1990, p. 151–53). These same traits are also taken up in written sources. In fact, in the epic poems, Muslims are described in the same way as sub-Saharan Blacks without differentiating between them. The black colour of their skin is a characteristic proper to some “Saracens” such as Abíme (Abyss) in the *Chanson de Roland* (end of the eleventh century), Fernagu in *Floovant* (twelfth century), Berruier in *Otinél* (twelfth century), Maubrun in *Fierabras* (ca. 1170), and Nabor in *L’Entrée d’Espagne* (beginning of the fourteenth century), where their skin is described in a series of comparisons as “blacker than pepper sauce,” “blacker than ink,” or “blacker than a raven.”<sup>6</sup> In all probability, these works of oral transmission reflect the popular perception of Muslims, who are frequently categorized as Blacks. In the Spanish epic poem *Poema de Fernán González* (ca. 1255), the soldiers of Almanzor are compared to Satan because they are ugly, dirty, and black as coal.<sup>7</sup>

The majority of the images of Blacks that appear in Romanesque art on the exterior corbels of churches can be found in Spain. These Black heads

<sup>6</sup>In *La Chanson d’Aspremont* a contingent of Turks has skin “blacker than ink” (1970, vv. 9806–9811, p. 118) and *Fierebras* (1966, v. 3085). Abíme in *La Chanson de Roland* (2003, v. 1634, p. 175); Ferragu in *Floovant* (1966, v. 390, p. 13); Berruier in *Otinél* (1966, vv. 926–927, p. 36) and Nabor in *L’Entrée d’Espagne* (1888, v. 7293, vol. 1, p. 266). It is also significant that in some epic poems the Christians pass for Muslims by painting their skin black; see Bancourt (1982, vol. 1, p. 68–69).

<sup>7</sup>“Mas feos que Satan con todo su convento, / quando sal del infyerno suzio e carv[o]niento”; *Poema de Fernán González* (1973), xvi, p. 73.



often appear characterized by gestures and combine all the traits associated with Africans: a broad nose, thick lips, and curly hair (See Monteiro 2009). Undoubtedly, the polychromy that covered a considerable part of Romanesque sculpture of the time served to make these Black heads stand out and be more recognizable in the eyes of the faithful.

In Jean Devisse's encyclopaedic study of the image of Blacks in Western art, he points out the fact that Spanish art provides us with the earliest medieval images of Black Africans due to its contact with al-Andalus (Devisse 1979, p. 86–87). In addition to the increasing presence of Muslims of Black origin in the Iberian Peninsula in the eleventh century, the Andalusí armies fighting against the Christians enlarged their ranks with sub-Saharan slaves, who were much prized as warriors (García-Fitz 2002, p. 89). The propagation of heads of Blacks with very realistic features in the corbels of Romanesque churches testifies to the astonishment and curiosity that the presence of Blacks must have caused in the peoples of Northern Spain.

It has been pointed out that the rejection of Blacks in Western Europe was even greater than that of Muslims (Sachs 1969, p. 891). In the thirteenth century, however, the image of the Black begins to separate itself from that of Muslims in Spanish art. Now dark skin can also be associated with gentiles, in a broader sense of the word, with certain types of converts and, of course, with the devil (Patton 2016, p. 213–38). On the other hand, when the colour black is mentioned in relation to Muslims, it is interpreted as a defect, a sign of its crimes and moral perversion.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the insistence on the blackness of the skin of the “Saracens” is a mechanism of demonization that reinforces their evil nature (Bancourt 1982, p. 69–71).

Collective mental representations do not always coincide with reality. We know that the majority of the Muslims of al-Andalus were local inhabitants converted to Islam. Some Andalusí rulers were blonde, and there were many Slavic slaves in the service of the Islamic courts of the West (Ajello 1995, p. 257–68). Many Spanish Christians of the time were probably aware of this ethnic plurality among their southern neighbours. The image of the Muslim with the features of a Black in Romanesque sculpture

<sup>8</sup>The black colour is listed among the defects of the Saracens, as it is an indication of disloyalty, perversity, and a lack of faith. This can be seen in the description of Âbime in the *Chanson de Roland*, whose black skin is mentioned in a litany of defects (2003, vv. 1473–1476; vv. 1634–1639, p. 175).

would correspond, therefore, to a wilful intent to purposely accent the physical differences between Christians and Muslims. Thus, we are dealing with an ideological construct that sought to display the Muslim as the other in visual terms and clothe his image in negative connotations.

Those African Blacks who arrived in the peninsula in the twelfth century were even more rejected than the rest of the Andalusis, for they made up an otherness that was not only religious but also ethnic, cultural—more so than the native Muslims—and, in many cases, social, because of their condition as slaves. The pejorative nature of Black heads in the Spanish Romanesque is particularly evident in the church at Moarves de Ojeda (Palencia), whose façade contains a head with curly hair and Black features, in addition to the ears of a rabbit or donkey (Monteira 2012a, p. 482). This image goes one step further in the demonization of the figure of the Black by means of animalization. Here the coexistence of Black and beastly traits admits an absolute notion of otherness that, on a conceptual plane, resulting in “expelling” the figure not only from the Christian community (for the colour of its skin) but also from the human species (for its animalism).

The assimilation of the Black to the Muslim in Romanesque art and in epic literature corresponded to a mechanism of construction of the image of the Muslim based on his characterization as different, as otherness. With it, the artist sought to depict the most negative idea of his religious rival, the one that was most irreconcilable with Christianity. Anthropologists have identified this tendency to accentuate their differences with outsiders—even when they are not so notorious—as typical of Western societies. Moreover, there is also a propensity to minimize variations within the group with which they identify (Van Dijk 2003, p. 46). It is significant that Muslims who convert to Christianity in the epic poems are usually white and blonde, or their skin becomes miraculously whitened when they are baptized (Bancourt 1982, p. 56–58; Strickland 2003, p. 167). On the other hand, it is interesting to observe that the Christian ideal of beauty conforms to opposing parameters of the other: thin lips and white skin are synonymous with beauty in the Hispanic world of the time (Averkorn 2000, p. 27–44; Monteiro 2012a, 483–84).

Muslims are also characterized by their black skin in panel painting and late Romanesque frescos (thirteenth century).<sup>9</sup> From these evidences we

<sup>9</sup>A significant example is the Saracen giant Ysoré, who is shown with dark skin and features, fighting against William of Orange in the thirteenth-century frescos at Tour Ferrande

can deduce that the loss of polychromy in the reliefs has, with the passage of time, deprived us of valuable information that would have enabled us to identify other figures marked by the dark colour of their skin.

But the Muslim is not always depicted in Romanesque sculpture with traits that denote his negative character or his defeat. In a capital in the outer window of Santa María del Rivero in San Esteban de Gormaz (Soria), there is an interesting horseman who is riding side-saddle and is led by a vassal (see Fig. 4.3). His caftan with wide sleeves and voluminous turban clearly identify him as a Muslim, while the parallel lines of his costume seem to evoke richly embroidered cloth. The stern expression on his face is similar to that of two other figures with identical dress but without horses on a nearby capital. The way he is seated on his horse and guided by a servant seems to indicate his high military or political rank; and his



**Fig. 4.3** Muslim rider, capital in a north outer window of Santa María del Rivero in San Esteban de Gormaz (Soria). Beginning of the twelfth century. Photo: Inés Monteiro

(Curzi 2007, p. 432–47). Another outstanding example is the *Viga de la Pasión* (Passion Beam), in which Christ's executioners appear as Black Muslims with their typical turbans ending in two parts; Museo Nacional de Arte de Cataluña (ca. 1200), inv. 015833.000.

majestic demeanor, without strident gestures, is in keeping with positive values within Romanesque sculpture (Garnier 1982, p. 121). The prominent belt or girdle on his caftan, with a kind of knot in the centre, is a further indication of his importance. The belt symbolizing power is associated with the depictions of rulers in Asiatic cultures and, in turn, inherited by Eastern Islam (Roux 1995, p. 196).

A closer look at the central motif on the belt reveals a human head with similar characteristics to those of its bearer. This may be a trophy-head alluding to the widespread practice of exhibiting the heads of enemies defeated in battle. During this period, Muslims frequently exhibited and hung the heads of rivals or defeated Christians from the top of their walls (Fierro 2008, p. 137–64). The Christian Kingdoms also adopted this practice to the extent that they hung the mutilated heads of Muslims at the doors of their churches.<sup>10</sup> In effect, San Esteban de Gormaz was Islamic until it was conquered definitively by the Christians in the middle of the eleventh century, after more than a century of bitterly fought battles. Construction of this church was begun shortly after the conquest at the end of the eleventh century and the presence of several figures with turbans on its capitals reflects this context of coexistence and conflict.

This equestrian figure might be interpreted as a brave Muslim leader who had probably triumphed over the Christians. In the epic poems we find references to Muslim generals who hung the heads of their vanquished enemies from their saddles as a sign of their great cruelty (Bancourt 1982, p. 178). Nevertheless, the absence of explicitly pejorative elements in this figure points to the sculptor's wish to present him as a brave and fearsome adversary. In the Spanish and French chronicles of the time, however, it is more common to find references to Muslim cowardice, which is described as proverbial, in contrast to Christian valour (Barkai 1984, p. 158–59, 243). But when it comes to narrating the battle itself, Muslim cowardice is transformed into ferocity and the enemy becomes a fearsome warrior, which makes the Christian victory an even greater triumph (Munro 1931, p. 329–43). This may be the possible meaning of the figure in Santa María del Rivero, where the will to show Muslim power refers back to those who had governed San Esteban de Gormaz in former times.

In the comparative analysis of the case studies presented here, we have tried to disseminate a few artistic procedures that may serve to aid in the

<sup>10</sup>As recorded in the *Crónica del Emperador Alfonso VII* (1997), Libro II, 71 (166), 72 (167), 75 (170), 79 (174), p. 117–19.

depiction of the Muslim in the twelfth century. We have shown how certain resources such as *the principle of verticality* are used in different places in Southern Romanesque art to symbolize the defeat of Islam and that Muslims are characterized by a few ethnic traits and a particular type of dress. The identification of these procedures can be very useful in developing some instruments of analysis that will enable us to delve deeper into the study of the visual construction of religious otherness in the twelfth century.

Many studies have already confirmed the existence of a few common iconographic keys in Romanesque art on a European scale. They have shown that both those who were responsible for the ideologies of the sculptural programs and the faithful who were recipients of those programs were familiar with them as well. This can be explained by the existence of so-called artists' notebooks that enabled a few similar figurative themes to be spread throughout different regions under the close supervision of the Church (Stratford 2006, p. 7–20). At the same time, however, each example we have analysed is linked to the specific context of each building and its patrons. Moreover, the *principle of verticality* also had a more universal application because it represented the victory over evil and the devil as well as over certain collectives—not necessarily Muslim—that were condemned by ecclesiastic moral authority. Finally, the image of Blacks began to encompass a wider semantic spectrum beginning in the twelfth century, thanks to the missions undertaken by the mendicant orders and the knowledge of distant lands learned from travellers in the late Middle Ages.<sup>11</sup> Although everything points to the fact that the Black in twelfth-century Western Christian art was assimilated into Islam, we should not overlook the fact that some of these images allude only to otherness or to the devil. This is why the definition of the meaning of the figurative procedures we have studied should not be taken too literally. It is always necessary to give priority to their immediate context in interpreting these works. Moreover, the characteristics of Muslims in Romanesque art are not necessarily applicable in later periods, given the changes in dress and European contact with other peoples.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> These figures do not necessarily represent an Islamic otherness. It is only in the fifteenth century, with the appearance of the Black king of the Three Wise Men, that we begin to see images of Blacks with the purpose of converting them to Christianity (Devisse 1979, part II, vol. 1, p. 161).

<sup>12</sup> In the fifteenth century, for example, the turban became fashionable in several parts of Europe. Furthermore, travellers and expeditions to Africa, Asia, and later on, to the Americas, revealed the existence of a multitude of non-Christian peoples and ethnic groups who were also non-Muslim.

On the other hand, examples like the ones in Santa María del Rivero (Gormaz) show the existence of other patterns applied to the image of the Muslim and evidence of a rich repertoire yet to be explored. This is due to the fact that the representation of religious otherness was not completely codified in the eleventh and twelfth centuries because it was still in its initial stages. We must wait until the late Gothic to see the visual stereotypes of Muslims fully defined, when the realistic nature of art made these forms more explicit (Strickland 2003). However, it is in the twelfth century when the image of the Muslim begins to take shape and divests itself, to a large extent, of biblical allusions and deals with contemporary reality.

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## Islamicate Goods in Gothic Halls: The *Nachleben* of Palma de Mallorca's Islamic Past

*Doron Bauer*

The departure point of this chapter is a broken ceramic vessel (Fig. 5.1) currently on display at the Almudaina—the former medieval palace or alcazar of Palma de Mallorca. The remains of the jar present stamped decorations typical of the Almohad period in al-Andalus (Soberats Sagreras et al. 1997; Riera Rullán 2007). They were found along the southwest wall of the palace during a rescue archaeological excavation conducted in advance of digging an elevator shaft. In November 2016, I found myself together with a group of scholars confronting this artefact as part of the Getty Foundation-sponsored project “Art, Space, and Mobility in the Early Ages of Globalization” (Baader et al. 2017). The circumstances in which the vessel was broken and discarded became the centre of a heated scholarly debate. On the one hand, an expert local professor from the Universitat de les Illes Balears argued that the vessel was purposefully

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M. Marcos Cobaleda (ed.), *Artistic and Cultural Dialogues in the Late Medieval Mediterranean*, Mediterranean Perspectives,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53366-3\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53366-3_5)



**Fig. 5.1** Remains of an Almoravid jar, Almudaina, Palma de Mallorca (Photo: The author)

destroyed during the Catalan conquest of the Islamic city in 1229.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, a group of “foreigners,” including myself, argued that there could be other more mundane and less dramatic possibilities to explain the vessel’s destruction, such as wear and abrasion.

Though we will never know what really happened to the vessel, the debate reveals two different paradigms for understanding the afterlife of Islamic culture in Majorca after the Christian conquest. What fascinated us, the foreigners, was the conviction of local scholars that the destruction of Islamicate artefacts was a result of the Christian conquest—a conviction exemplifying a broader view subscribing to the notion that the conquest had abruptly eradicated any trace of both Muslims and Islamic culture on the island, resulting in a pure and homogenous Christian-Catalan society. This assumption of a swift and complete colonization of the islands and the total annihilation of the indigenous people and their culture provides

<sup>1</sup>To support his argument, the local professor pointed to the location where the jar was found—outside yet very near to the compound walls on the southwest side facing the bay.

the prism through which the local scholar, among many others, viewed the shattered artefact. It must have been destroyed when Catalan troops stormed Madīnat Mayūrqa, since afterwards the city became Christian, Aragonese, and European almost instantaneously.

This colonization model offered by the Balearics is distinct from models encountered on the mainland in general and in the Crown of Aragon in particular. Catalonia had thriving Mudéjar communities at its southern border, such as Lérida. Muslims constituted around 30% of the Kingdom of Aragon's population and were an essential part of its low-class labour force, and in Valencia the Muslims vastly outnumbered the crusader settlers (Burns 1990). The importance of the Balearic colonization is derived not only from its distinctness from these models, but also from the fact it is thought by many scholars to be the birthplace of a set of systematic colonial practices that will be applied several centuries later during the discovery of the New World (Fernández-Armesto 1987, p. 11–41).

In the realm of aesthetics, the paradigm of the obliterating conquest finds support in the overall appearance of Palma's present-day urban fabric. Very few traces of Islamic or Islamic-influenced buildings are visible in the city today. Instead, what strikes the visitor as omnipresent is the Gothic style of the major public medieval monuments. More specifically, the particular Majorcan flavour of the Gothic is a clean, restrained, serene, mathematical "rational" style that stands in marked contrast with more ornate versions of the Gothic (e.g. Flamboyant) and even more so with the possibilities for decorative exuberance offered by the then contemporary Islamic and Mudéjar styles.

The independent kings of Majorca began a massive construction campaign toward the end of the thirteenth century (Domenge i Mesquida 2013). Growth in revenue was one of the causes, but more importantly, the vulnerable and short-lived dynasty sought to consolidate its dispersed territories in the Balearics, Roussillon, Cerdanya, Montpellier, Aumelas, and Carlat (in Auvergne) by creating an infrastructure for an itinerant court as well as a new idiosyncratic visual language to communicate royal power. Bellver Castle is emblematic of these efforts. Built on a perfect circular plan, its structural and geometric purity is remarkable. The repetitive regular forms and refrain from ornamental excess generate a formal rigor that seems to celebrate architectural mastery. Bellver is unique, though scholars have suggested several sources of inspiration for its construction. Its architect was most probably Ponç des Coll from Roussillon; its circular shape can be traced to southern Italy (Castel del Monte), at the

time controlled by the Angevins, with whom the Majorcan dynasty nurtured close matrimonial relations (Mira 2003, p. 65–67; Domenge i Mesquida 2013, 2014, p. 327–33)<sup>2</sup>; and in 1299, shortly before the construction of the castle began, Ramon Lull wrote his *Geometria nova*, offering a speculative and abstract reflection on geometry wherein the circle occupied a prominent place (see also Gayà 2011). Other buildings from the period also demonstrate the same flavour of the Gothic, such as the royal palace in Perpignan; the large-scale renovation and transformation (or conversion) of Palma’s old Islamic palace, the Almudaina, which had remained damaged yet largely in its original form for about 70 years since the conquest; and within the Almudaina, the royal chapel of Santa Ana (Catafau and Passarrius 2014; Sastre Moll 1989). The Llotja dels Mercaders demonstrates that the style continued to shape the urban fabric of Palma at least into the fifteenth century (Fig. 5.2). Built by Guillem



**Fig. 5.2** Llotja dels Mercaders, Palma de Mallorca, Mallorca (Photo: The author)

<sup>2</sup>These authors do not think the two monuments were actually linked because they are simply too different in terms of form, use, and aesthetics. Moreover, their respective dates are too far apart; therefore, the matrimonial relations are insufficient to justify the connection.

Sagrera, the Llotja served as a stock exchange mainly for merchants engaged in maritime trade. Its clean, almost ascetic interior is dominated by mesmerizing spiralling columns, sinusoidal ribbed vaulting, and flying staircases communicating purity and precision, as if the whole space was designed to breathe life into mathematical formulas.

The seeming lack of Islamic or Islamic-related aesthetics in these buildings, and in a city that became Christian only in the thirteenth century, has led scholars to argue that Palma's towering "purist" gothic monuments embodied an ideological effort at cultural erasure and a break with its Saracen past (Domenge i Mesquida 2013, p. 82–83). To what extent conquered Palma was purged of the Islamic is the question to which I would like to turn now.

In order to address this question, one must consider the survival, or lack thereof, of Muslims in Palma after the Christian conquest. If a substantial Muslim community still existed in Palma in the second half of the thirteenth century and into the fourteenth century, then it must have had an effect on the city's visual and material cultures. The problem is that no surviving historical documents describe in a systematic and detailed manner the fate of the Muslims on the island, forcing scholars into the realm of speculation. It is reasonable to assume that large portions of the Islamic population were killed, enslaved, or fled to nearby Minorca and North Africa during or soon after the surrender of the city. However, how many remained and under which legal and cultural circumstances is far from clear, especially for the first decades following the conquest (Lourie 1970; Soto i Company 1994; Jover Avellà et al. 2006).

A careful examination of material vestiges as well as the fragmentary documental evidence may allow us to address this mystery, at least partially. Common ceramic, essential for daily life, demonstrates continuity between pre- and post-conquest Palma both in terms of the types of vessels produced and the manufacturing processes used (Rosselló Bordoy and Sastre Moll 1982, p. 259). This continuity in ceramic forms suggests the survival of Islamic elements in Palma's society. A document from May 13, 1278 relating the sale of a Saracen potter in Majorca as a slave may confirm such an assumption:

Salamo Benedet judei (...) vendo tibi Maimono Abennono judei (...) tribi sarracenis (...) Abraim Benjafia Albeguy jarraris (...).<sup>3</sup>

However, there are different ways to explain both the continuity in ceramic forms and the presence of Saracen potters in Palma. For example, a community of Muslims who converted to Christianity may account for the persistence of ceramic production. The apologetics of Ramon Lull, aimed at establishing the superiority of Christianity over the two other Abrahamic religions—*El Llibre del Gentil e los tres savis* (1274–1276)—was written in Catalan and not in Arabic, suggesting that its target audience was a now-aculturated community of former Muslims who converted yet still followed crypto-Islamic practices (Rosselló Bordoy and Sastre Moll 1982). Furthermore, we know that Muslims moved to the island after the conquest. Some were slaves, while others were freemen who came to Palma to supply a demand for their professional expertise. Based on the surviving records of the special taxes imposed on Saracens staying in or leaving the island—“dret de stada de sarrahins” and “dret de exida de sarrahins”—Jaume Sastre Moll estimated that at the beginning of the fourteenth century around 5000 Muslims lived in Majorca, between 8–10% of the total population (Sastre Moll 1988). It is difficult to assess how many of them descended from the pre-conquest population and how many were newcomers. However, the ratio of Muslim men to Muslim women was greater than 3:1, indicating that a large portion of this population consisted of either migration workers or imported slaves (Sastre Moll 1988, esp. p. 129–30). More specifically, many of those Muslims were craftsmen and artisans. In addition to the aforementioned potter, in Palma after the conquest we can find Muslim sawyers, plasterers, stonemasons, blacksmiths, and even a painter, Mafument ibn Ali, mentioned in a document from 1272 (Llompарт 1977, 4:doc. 27, p. 35–36; Lourie 1970, 633).

Documents related to the ongoing renovation of the Almudaina and the construction of Bellver Castle list the names of some of these craftsmen (Rosselló Bordoy and Sastre Moll 1982; see also Sastre Moll 1989, 2007). Considering the contribution of dozens of Muslim craftsmen to these building campaigns, the “purity” of the Gothic in Palma may seem somewhat tainted. Influenced by French and Italian models, the design itself was indeed gothic; however, its execution was at least partially

<sup>3</sup> Arxiu del regne de Mallorca, Escrivania de Cartes Reials 349, fol. 4v (Rosselló i Vaquer 2004, p. 80).

Islamic. The contrast between design and execution challenges the way we tend to categorize architectural styles.<sup>4</sup> Often, the overall outline of a building dictates its stylistic affiliation. But if a wall of a gothic building was plastered by a Muslim known for his distinctive technique, then how should that wall be labelled? In other words, can the details of the finish undermine the classification of the design?

Gottfried Kerscher raises a similar point. In the new buildings of Palma he detects structural characteristics derived from Islamic palatial architecture, such as “wide and flat elements,” spaces combined with courtyards and loggias, and “comfortable staircases which lead to the ceremonial areas and rooms” (Kerscher 2009). The convergence of these Islamic *structural* qualities and gothic *formal* qualities produces a new architectural style that appears to be gothic on the surface but upon closer examination betrays additional influences.<sup>5</sup>

There is at least one example of endemic objects that continued to be produced uninterruptedly from before the Islamic occupation of the Balearics until the present day, attesting to the continuity in ceramic forms mentioned above. *Siurells*, or small clay figurines that are whitewashed and decorated with touches of colour, are associated with peasant culture and depict a wide range of animals, fantastic creatures, and social types. They were believed to have an Islamic origin, though later studies have connected them with Minoan Cretan pottery (Rosselló Bordoy 1973, p. 123–48). The *Siurells* demonstrate the persistence of certain artistic forms in the Balearics, the consequence of insularity-derived isolation that at times manages to withstand frequent and reoccurring waves of colonization.

Aside from local production, Islamic objects never ceased to be imported to Palma. The city’s domestic interiors are well documented in the exceptionally rich archives of Palma de Mallorca, mainly in the form of notarial inventories. Entries in those inventories mention ceramics from

<sup>4</sup>At times, there is a tendency among architectural historians to disregard architectural ornament and surfaces as secondary elements compared to plans, volumes, and structures.

<sup>5</sup>Kerscher further argues that these Islamic structural qualities were required since the kings of Majorca sought to emulate Islamic aulic rituals. While it is true that the kings of Majorca were innovative in developing and codifying court life, as attested by James III of Majorca’s *Leges palatinae*, Kerscher’s suggestion remains speculative. During the second half of the century, the Castilian kings did appropriate Islamic architectural elements to develop new conceptions and visualizations of political power associated with new courtly ceremonies (Ruiz Souza 2013; Almagro Gorbea 2013).



Malaga,<sup>6</sup> decorated textiles from Alexandria,<sup>7</sup> leather from Cordoba, Turkish carpets,<sup>8</sup> Saracen shoes, and even decorated ostrich eggs.<sup>9</sup> For a fourteenth-century inventory, the inventory of the Jewish physician Lleó (also named Jahuda) Mosconi and his wife Muna (1375) is particularly rich in Islamicate objects, a fact that may attest to the important role the Jewish community of Palma played in maintaining an active link with Islamic culture in general and Islamic artistic traditions in particular. The beautiful carpet pages from the Farhi Bible—a manuscript illuminated by the Jewish mapmaker Cresques Abraham—are another good example of the prevalence of Islamicate aesthetics among the Jews in Majorca (Riera 1975).

Archaeological excavations corroborate the information provided by the inventories. For example, in 1990, an excavation of a cesspit found at a site once occupied by the brothel of the medieval city revealed a fourteenth-century deposit of high-quality medieval tableware, including Nasrid ceramics (which were commonly known as ceramics from Malaga) (Serra Vives *in press*). Moreover, Mallorquins actively sought to emulate Islamic ware. In the first document to link pottery production in Manises

<sup>6</sup>“Novem perapsides terre de Malicha” in the inventory of the Jewish physician Lleó (also named Jahuda) Mosconi and his wife Muna (1375), Arxiu del regne de Mallorca Prot. P-139, 57v–62r (Hillgarth 1991, vols. 2, p. 434–41). “Unum bacimum verde operis de Malicha” and “unam scutellam Magnam, Malicha” in the inventory of Pere Real (1383), Arxiu del regne de Mallorca Prot. Pere Ribalta, Testaments e Inventaris, 1370–1383, fols. 87–100 (Llompert 1994). “Dos refredadors de terra e tres plat grans de Malica” in the inventory of the notary Miquel Abeyar (1493) (Aguiló 1898). “Refredadora obra de Malica” and “plats de terra obra de Malica” in the inventory of Onofre Canet (1502), Arxiu del regne de Mallorca T-858, fols. 139–144 (Sastre Moll 1997, p. 216).

<sup>7</sup>“Hun cubertor gran ab la cuberta listada obre de Alexandria” in the inventory of the merchant Maties Reya (1474), Arxiu del regne de Mallorca Prot. Not. M. Abeyar (A-76), fols. 2-12v (Sastre Moll 1997, p. 165).

<sup>8</sup>“Una pell de Corodva blanca açauada” and “una catifa obra de Turquia” in the inventory of nobleman Ludovico Çanglada (1480), Arxiu del regne de Mallorca T-855, fols. 90-123v (Sastre Moll 1997, p. 193, 197). Fifteenth-century Cordoba was under Christian control, but the city was already well known for its leatherwork in the Islamic period.

<sup>9</sup>“Duo soculares crocei coloris sarracénicas” and “tria ova de strucio cum earum garnimentis” in the inventory of the Jewish physician Lleó (also named Jahuda) Mosconi and his wife Muna (1375); see footnote 6. On decorated ostrich eggs in the premodern Mediterranean, see (Conwell 1987) and the beautiful exemplar from the National Museum of Underwater Archeology, Cartagena: [http://www.spainisculture.com/en/obras\\_de\\_excelencia/museo\\_nacional\\_de\\_arqueologia\\_subacuatica/huevo\\_de\\_avestruz\\_decorado.html](http://www.spainisculture.com/en/obras_de_excelencia/museo_nacional_de_arqueologia_subacuatica/huevo_de_avestruz_decorado.html) (accessed April 26, 2017).

with that of Malaga, dating from 1326, Guillem de Vilargent, a merchant from Majorca, commissions a large amount of painted lustreware imitating Malaga ware from a Valencian Saracen potter:

Çahat Mo[r]molan, magister operis terre picte, (...) quinguaginta dotzenas inter gresallos et scutellas operis terre picte Manizes consimilis operis Maleche.<sup>10</sup>

These Islamicate objects were placed even in Christian religious contexts. For example, the inventory of the church of Lluc lists a silk pallium for decorating the altar of Saint Peter: “hun pali de seda morisca al altar de sent Pere” (Mir 1890, p. 214). Similarly, the merchant Bernat Pujol had a Moorish curtain decorating an image of the Virgin in his dining room:

Primo hun ymatge de Nostra Dona ab dos àngels pintat sobre cànem ab son bastiment de fusta. Item una stora de paret morischa, pintada de larch de X palms vella. (Sastre Moll 2003, p. 83)

The term Moorish can be confusing, since it can refer to either imported or locally produced objects, but its use here attests to the acknowledgment and appreciation of a specific aesthetic tradition attributed to the Moors.

The Catalan occupation of Palma attempted a colonial erasure of the Islamic past.<sup>11</sup> The colonizers superimposed a European architectural over-grid on the former Islamic city, which manifested mainly in the “pure” gothic style of important religious and secular public buildings whose goal, among others, was to symbolically communicate the power and identity of the ruling elite. However, coexisting with this aesthetic vertical axis—vertical because of its physical impact on the city’s skyline and because it was imposed by the upper echelon of a colonial society—was an aesthetic horizontal axis consisting of the circulation of Islamic and Islamicate objects, the product of trade. The clean, mathematical gothic halls of Palma were populated by oriental objects generating a particular

<sup>10</sup> Arxiu del Regne de València Prot. Aparoco Lappart, 10,408 (López Elum 1984, p. 33, 39, 42).

<sup>11</sup> I am not suggesting that the Christian conquerors had a conscious and clear master plan for colonizing every aspect of the Balearics, including the aesthetic. There is no doubt that the outcome of the conquest included an attempt to suppress Islamic aesthetics. However, the incentives for such colonization were multifaceted and most probably over-determined.

aesthetic dissonance. Nowadays, it is difficult to imagine these two aspects, or axes, coexisting since the objects that circulated have largely perished, while the more durable architecture survived.

This modality of colonial erasure was to be followed by a second, much later one that has to do with the treatment of Islamic heritage in the recent past. Today, Majorca displays few hidden traces of its Islamic past. One such trace is the Banys Arabs—the Arab Baths—that became part of the Santa Clara convent and as a result were preserved. Nevertheless, we know very little about the pace of the destruction and the transformation of Islamic buildings after 1229. The Almudaina in its Islamic form was damaged during the conquest and remained as such until its renovation by the Kings of Majorca at the very beginning of the fourteenth century. Other buildings, mosques for example, are mentioned in the *Llibre del Repartiment*, but it is difficult to determine their exact location or their fate (Soto i Company 1979; Rosselló Bordoy 2007). Many of these once public buildings were given to Christian aristocrats to serve as private residences (Soto i Company 1979; Pérez Pastor 1991). However, their original Islamic function lingered in the collective memory. A house in Sóller is mentioned in a document from 1304, almost 80 years after the conquest, as “*cuiusdam domus cum suo porticu qua tempore sarracenorum fuit mesquida*” (Pérez Pastor 1991, p. 33). Toponyms are another mode of collective recollection, albeit a more latent one. The name of the Drassana, the square northwest of the Llotja that functioned as a boatyard, is, like the word “arsenal,” the Latinization of “*dār al-ṣināʿa*,” literally a workshop in Arabic (Rosselló Bordoy 2007, p. 56).

This partial survival of the Islamic urban fabric suffered substantial damage as part of Palma’s modernization. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, a growing population, deteriorating sanitation, and declining life expectancy led to a major urban reform plan conceived by the engineer Bernardo Calvet. Both Plan Calvet and later Plan Alomar in the 1940s dramatically changed the urban landscape (for the latter, see Alomar Esteve 1950). Among the changes, the ancient city walls were dismantled and with them the vestiges of Islamic fortifications. After much controversy, the city gate of Santa Margalida or Puerta Pintada, or in Arabic Bāb al-Kofol, through which the Catalan victors entered the Islamic city in 1229 and which until 1912 still incorporated several Arabic inscriptions, was also demolished (in 1912, three and a half years after it was declared as a National Monument, an organized group of unidentified workers mysteriously showed up at the gate and blew it with dynamite) (Ysasi

1998, p. 154–71).<sup>12</sup> The Saint Anthony gate (Bāb al-Balad) suffered a similar fate (Rosselló Bordoy 2007, p. 60–61). The outline and the towers of the Almudaina de Gumara, the massive twelfth-century Islamic fortress at the Eastern side of the city, were still visible in Francisco Coello’s city map from 1851, whereas little remains of the compound today (Tous Meliá 2002).

In modern times, a latent and not necessarily conscious effort has been made to disregard if not to destroy vestiges of the city’s Islamic past. During the modernization of the city, Islamic remains were collected and stored. A fire in the basement of the Ayuntamiento at the beginning of the twentieth century destroyed such valuable remains as a key stone with a monumental Arabic inscription from the former Eastern gate of the city, and a beautiful and rare ornate interior door frame that was stored in the Museo Arquelógico Luliano was last documented in a poor photograph from the late nineteenth century (Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando 1908, p. 48, 72). Such negligence continues into the present day. In 2007, for example, two precious wooden ceilings were burned in the storage of the Ministry of Education and Culture. No efforts were made to restore the valuable and unique ceilings, and the doors of the storage area were left open after the fire, leaving the remains of the ceilings unprotected.<sup>13</sup> Needless to say, the treatment of gothic retables throughout the past two centuries, for example, demonstrates a different attitude.

Moreover, surviving Islamic and Islamicate monuments are presented in an ambiguous manner even today. The little known and little studied wooden ceiling of the Alfabia—originally an Islamic villa with gardens north of Palma that after the conquest was given to Ben-Abet, a Muslim who, like others, cooperated with the conquering forces—possibly dates to the Islamic period (Palou and Plantalamor 1974; Busquets 1953).<sup>14</sup> Two sets of panels placed below the ceiling (Fig. 5.3) present inconsistent information. The white panels inform the visitor that the ceiling is Islamic

<sup>12</sup>The debate over the destruction of the Puerta Pintada is of particular interest since it betrays different attitudes towards the construction of Islamic heritage in Palma at the beginning of the twentieth century (Bauer 2019).

<sup>13</sup>“El Govern abandona los restos de los dos artesanados del siglo XIV quemados en enero,” <http://web.psoe.es/palmanord/news/155946/page/govern-abandona-los-restos-los-dos-artesanados-del-siglo-xiv-quemados-enero.html> (accessed September 13, 2017).

<sup>14</sup>On the Islamic origin of the Alfabia, see Pere Marsili 1850, p. 244–45.

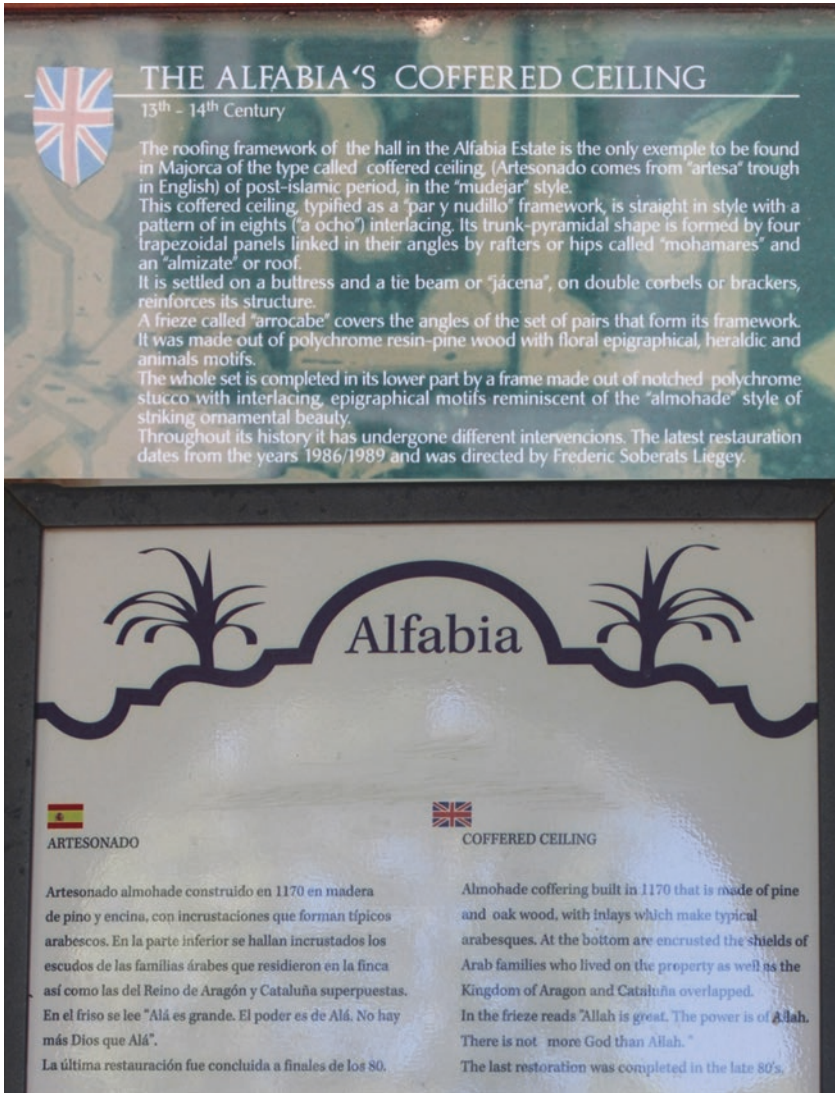


Fig. 5.3 Two panels referring to the wooden ceiling, The Gardens of Alfabia, Mallorca (Photo: The author)

and dates to 1170, while the green ones state that it is a Mudéjar work from the Christian period, either the thirteenth or the fourteenth century.

This modern modality of the erasure of the Islamic past is an ongoing process related to nation-building and the formation of Mallorquin identity. In general, Mallorquins are intellectually aware of, acknowledge, and do not resent the historical presence of Muslims on the island. However, unlike in the cities of Andalusia, for example, the Islamic, Islamicate, and Mudéjar are not parts of their cultural identity (Ruiz Souza 2006; Feliciano and Ruiz Souza 2017). Similar to Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz's famous argument regarding the purity of Spanish identity and its resistance to Islamic and Jewish influences, the Mallorquins nurture a puristic self-image that has historically been first and foremost Catalan and Christian (Sánchez-Albornoz 1975).<sup>15</sup> Projecting their own modern identity into the past, the Catalan conquest marks for them a decisive and almost total break with the Islamic period. As a result, the conquest is telescoped into a singular event rather than viewed as a process unfolding over time. More than 300 years of Islam in Majorca are disregarded as having very little if any impact on what came after. For the Mallorquins, their national history begins in 1229. This denial of historical continuity is perhaps a common colonial ideological mechanism aiming at the repression of the colonized and the legitimization of the colonizer.

In practical terms, this erasure is partially institutionalized and manifests itself in various forms. Currently, there are several professors of Christian medieval art history in the Universitat de les Illes Balears but none of Islamic art history. Magdalena Riera Frau, who works for the Ajuntament, is the only archaeologist on the island who specializes in the Islamic period, thus substantially limiting the scale of relevant excavations. Ecclesiastic authorities are not always enthusiastic about excavating under churches and monasteries, which often replaced mosques and *madrassas*, and the new medieval halls of the Museu de Mallorca celebrate mostly Christian altarpieces whereas Islamic ceramics, jewellery, and monumental inscriptions are either kept in storage or relegated to marginal display spaces.

<sup>15</sup> It is important to state that our characterization of Mallorquin identity is based on impressions and familiarity with the culture rather than on a comprehensive and rigorous anthropological-sociological study. However, interestingly, even in recent discussions of Mallorquin identity, there is no acknowledgement whatsoever of the island's Islamic past (Jordà i Sánchez et al. 2016).

These two modalities of erasures define the particular internal logic of the aesthetic colonization of Madīnat Mayūrqa. Through the interstices of collective memory and material evidence it is clear that Islam and the Islamicate lingered beyond the singular point of the Christian conquest. There was some continuity of local artistic production, new Muslim artisans arrived on the island, and there was some importing of Islamicate objects as well as the survival of existing monuments. The result was a hierarchical aesthetic system with two axes: the first consisted of the superimposed Gothic and pertained first and foremost to architecture, to containers that shape and define space, therefore making it static, vertical, monumental, public, and official. The second axis consisted of portable and less durable Islamicate objects that circulated in the gothic halls, objects that for the most part were domestic, private, and secular.

The tectonic changes triggered by the salient events of the end of the fifteenth century—the reconfiguration of Mediterranean trade due to the “discovery” of the New World and the rise of the Ottoman empire, the completion of the *Reconquista*, the expulsion of Muslims and Jews from Iberia—must have had an effect on the tenacity of Islam and the Islamicate in Mallorca. Nevertheless, it is from the end of the nineteenth century that we witness an unprecedented destruction of medieval Islamic heritage in Palma. Two prominent examples are the dismantling of the old walls and with them the remains of the Islamic fortifications as well as the formation of excavation, collection and display practices that are geared towards the construction of a puristic Christian-Catalan national identity, an identity that obliges, among other things, the concealment and effacement of the Islamic past.

I am hopeful that exposing in detail these historical variations of the remembrance of Islam in Mallorca and the difficulty of modern Mallorquin national identity to incorporate and contain the Islamic past even in a subjugated form will initiate new kind of discussions on the possibilities of the preservation of Islamic cultural heritage in the Balearics and beyond.

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# Granada and Castile in the Shared Context of the Islamic Art in the Late Medieval Mediterranean

*Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza*

## 6.1 INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>: WHY SHOULD WE HAVE TO EXPAND THE CONTEXT TO UNDERSTAND THE ANDALUSI ART?

Nasrid Granada, the last remaining kingdom of al-Andalus, and Castile, in the late Middle Ages, had common goals within the arts (political and religious messages); they must be studied in context of Islamic art. Before going any further it is important to consider Andalusí art as both a creative

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<sup>1</sup>This article has been financed by a Spanish Project I+D of the National Research Plan: *Al-Acmes. Al-Andalus, ciencia y contextos en un Mediterráneo abierto. De Occidente a Egipto y Siria*. RTI2018–093880-B-100. Certain aspects of this paper have been addressed in other own previous articles with different aims (Ruiz Souza in press).

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centre and a mere periphery between Islamic art and Spanish art. We need to understand how historiography has established differing views about the role of Andalusí art in the construction of the Spanish medieval art depending on the researchers' goals. We shall continually state in this chapter that there was a very rich shared cultural context.

The importance of palaces as monuments in the city-palace of the Alhambra and the Generalife is such that they have monopolised and isolated Nasrid art from the general context of Islamic culture because, today, the territories of al-Andalus belong to a country of Christian culture. On the other hand, when the arts in Castile have to do with those of al-Andalus, they are often been studied in a different chapter (Mudéjar art) because they were promoted for a medieval Christian society. Many buildings of the Crown of Castile, such as the Royal Alcazar in Seville, among other palaces, are linked to Islamic art in addition to Islamic funerary constructions: spaces with a dome and a centralised plan (*qubba*), sometimes covered by *muqarnas* domes (Ruiz Souza 2001a, p. 9–36), etc. In this article, we shall mention buildings from Castile, al-Andalus, Egypt, Sicily, Syria, Morocco and so on in a same shared cultural chapter. Religion is very important but it is not everything.

Nasrid art has a number of contexts that cannot be overlooked. We must examine the preceding Andalusí environment and Almohad art in particular. When the Almohad caliphate disappeared around the middle of the thirteenth century, four closely related kingdoms arose during the late Middle Ages, with centres in Tunis, Tlemcen, Fez and Granada, and they should not be studied separately. The relationship between Nasrid art in Granada and Merinid art in Fez was especially productive. Likewise, Islamic art in the Eastern and central Mediterranean should be studied, meaning the Mamluk in Egypt and its capital city, Cairo, which was the capital of the Mediterranean from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. There was a close cultural relationship between medieval Spain and Egypt.<sup>2</sup>

We should also not forget the art of the Crown of Castile, as it was closely related to al-Andalus art throughout the Middle Ages. It has always been studied as a Christian art (mozarab [Bango Torviso 1991] and Mudéjar art).<sup>3</sup> For example, the Almohad and Nasrid *muqarnas* domes

<sup>2</sup> About this aspect, see Calvo Capilla (2017).

<sup>3</sup> There are many commentaries about Mudéjar art. See Borrás Gualis (1990, p. 13–36); López Guzmán (2000, p. 23–62); Ruiz Souza (2016, p. 197–218).

were imitated for funerary or religious purposes in Cordoba and Toledo cathedrals, and the Huelgas Reales monastery in Burgos, as we will later see. There are also a great many other examples that historiographers have included under Mudéjar art instead of Islamic art, although its full significance was taken over by Christian patrons. It is obvious that the religion has been established as a historiographic border extremely difficult to get through. The Middle Ages are not just religion, are not just cathedrals or mosques, they are much more than it.

The existing relationship between the palatine architectures of al-Andalus and the ones undertaken by the Castilian Crown is visible in the visual culture of power they shared: the forms, meanings and messages and, in particular, the resemblance among the different typologies of façades and halls of the throne as well as the use of decorative elements reminiscent of al-Andalus. The development of palatine architecture in al-Andalus did not go unnoticed in the Christian kingdoms of the North. The Crown of Castile, immersed between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries in the Genesis of the Modern State, elaborated and created a new concept of specialised palace that was not exempt from Andalusí contributions. A true palatine city was created, as is still being studied in the Royal Alcazar of Seville, where the Castilian monarchy developed its spaces of representation, or rather of exaltation. In that process, al-Andalus buildings were assumed, copied and emulated to varying degrees in the Crown of Castile, as evidenced by the artistic forms found. Decorative elements, spaces or even ideological messages were taken over, as is shown in a number of royal and noble palaces erected between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The reign of Pedro I (1350–1369), during which important palatine complexes were built, such as the Alcazar of Seville (Fig. 6.1a) and the Alcazar of Carmona (Almagro Gorbea 2013), was especially interesting in this sense. Other royal palaces built under the same reign served as a foundation for the convent of Santa Clara de Tordesillas (Valladolid) (Fig. 6.1b) or the convent-palace of Santa Clara de Astudillo (Palencia). The monarch saw within the architecture of al-Andalus, and in particular in the Alhambra of Muḥammad V (1354–1359, 1362–1391), the specialised palace (halls of the throne, monumental façades, halls of justice, places of wisdom, courtyards, etc.) he needed for his political project of strengthening royal power. The palace would indeed become a fundamental piece of that process by becoming the backdrop for



**Fig. 6.1** (a) Alcazar of Seville, 1364. (b) Palace of Tordesillas (Valladolid), ca. 1360 (Photos by the author)

presentation of the new image of the king. It is for this reason the despotic character of the Muslim rulers—who held both the political and religious power—seemed to serve as a source of inspiration (Ruiz Souza 2014, p. 35–54).

Nasrid art displays many features originating from the al-Andalus tradition (Orihuela Uzal 1996). The palace-city of Madīnat al-Zahrā' in Umayyad Cordoba (tenth century) must be remembered as a true laboratory for civil architecture, giving rise to the type of palaces studied in al-Andalus and Nasrid Granada for centuries and, as well, in the Crown of Castile. A high percentage of these buildings were laid out around a rectangular courtyard, with porticoes on two sides opening into the main rooms of the palace. This formula was copied time and again in the palaces of the Alhambra, as seen in the Comares Palace and the Generalife.

The artistic context should be elaborated. A study of the Palace of the Lions in the Alhambra, regarded within the context of North African

Islamic art, led us to the hypothesis that it acted as *madrasa*, *zawiya* and tomb of Muḥammad V—and again, Egypt became the key factor in understanding this, as it was in relation to Merinid art in Morocco (Marçais 1935-1945, p. 264–70; Ruiz Souza 2001b, p. 77–120). The Mamluk context of Egypt (thirteenth–fifteenth centuries) needs to be expanded to the Ayyubids of Syria (twelfth–thirteenth centuries), since both form part of a cultural unit sharing several parameters. This also happens with the study of the symbology of *muqarnas* domes and their use in funerary and religious rites—a well-known aspect in Egypt and Syria (Tabbaa 1985, p. 61–74)—but yet scarcely touched on in relation to Spain (Ruiz Souza 2000, p. 9–24).

The fall of Constantinople, after being sacked by the Venetians at the beginning of the thirteenth century, together with the defeats inflicted on the Crusades by the Zenghids, Ayyubids and Mamluks, explains why Cairo became the political and artistic capital of the entire Mediterranean between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. Between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Sunnī orthodoxy was reinstated in the whole of the central and Eastern area of the Mediterranean, thereby largely reinstating what had previously been established by the Shi‘ia Fatimids.<sup>4</sup> This historic event would create a complete cultural unit that grew and defined its nature over three centuries of rule by the Zenghids (1123–1183) of Nūr al-Dīn, followed by Saladin’s Ayyubids (1183–1250), and the Mamluks (1250–1517) under Baybarṣ and Qalāwūn. Architecture is one of the best exponents of the whole process. Architectural languages do not change, they simply continue and improve. The rich sources written during the historical period, inscriptions on monuments and wonderful architectural remains that have been preserved—many of which are still in use today, tell of a long period of cultural supremacy, despite political divisions.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>This aspect is described by Nasser Rabbat and Yasser Tabbaa in their many papers (Rabbat 2010; Tabbaa 2001).

<sup>5</sup>Without forgetting the many specialists who have studied the period in one way or another, anyone wishing to get a start on the subject can turn to the more recent works of Yasser Tabbaa, Doris Behrens-Abouseif and, especially, Nasser Rabbat, whose book *Mamluk History through architecture. Monuments, culture and politics in medieval Egypt and Syria*, is of particular interest. It provides a good summary of his writing over the last few decades, in which he uses architecture to analyse history, written sources, politics, society, culture, display of power, fame, philanthropy and religion. See also Tabbaa (2001); Behrens-Abouseif (2007).

6.2 THE MEANING OF ORNAMENT (GRABAR 1992):<sup>6</sup>  
 THE PALACE OF THE LIONS IN THE ALHAMBRA  
 AND MUQARNAŞ DOMES IN THE CROWN OF CASTILE.  
 A SHARED ORTHODOX SYMBOL OF THE CREATION  
 AND THE VIRTUE

Outstanding features of Nasrid architecture are the delicacy and versatility of the inner rooms; the play of light and perspective; and the wealth of decoration on all surfaces—both inside and out—through plasterwork, paintings, ceramics and woodwork. Although the architecture in al-Andalus or in Castile frequently used simple materials (adobe, masonry, plaster, brick and wood), it was able to project the luxury of the sumptuous arts through the use of decoration that made the inner surfaces of the palaces appear to be built of ivory, silk and goldwork. The noblest material used was marble, which was especially reserved for columns, capitals and fountains.

The art of decorative plasterwork deserves special mention, as it was used quite successfully in al-Andalus from the eleventh century, as seen in the Aljafería palace in Saragossa (which belonged to the Tā'ifa kingdoms), and especially in the Almohad art developed between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Villalba Sola 2015). Plasterwork from the Almohad era usually depicts plants in a geometric design, mostly rhomboid or *sebka*. Examples can be found in the Seville palaces, or in remains from southeast Spain, Murcia in particular. The tradition continued in Nasrid Granada—but with an explosion of creativity that led to stunning new types of decoration that combined epigraphic, geometric and floral elements, sometimes very naturally, as observed in the Palace of the Lions. Special attention must be paid to the *muqarnaş* domes,<sup>7</sup> discussed later, as they became the highest expression of the art of plasterwork in an architectural sense, and of Islamic orthodoxy in a religious meaning. As we will see, the *muqarnaş* dome is the visualisation of certain philosophical and religious ideas through architecture with a solid mathematical basis (Dold-Samplonius 1992, p. 193–242).

<sup>6</sup>Our tribute to Oleg Grabar's book, *The mediation of ornament*.

<sup>7</sup>Many good researchers have written about this subject from different aspects (for instance, Tabbaa 1985; Marcos Coboleda and Pirot 2016; Carrillo-Calderero 2017; Ruiz Souza 2000, etc.).



The *muqarnaṣ* domes—a subject we have discussed on several occasions—symbolise the start of creation, the essence and beginning of material before it was given a concrete form by divine hand. The *muqarnaṣ* are the units or primary cells from which “Creation” would arise as a whole, depending on how they are combined by God’s will. In other words, we are faced with the Ash’arite orthodox Islamic philosophical tenets of atomism and randomness, whose greatest exponent was the Iraqi philosopher, al-Bāqillānī (ca. 950–1013). It became widely used in the orthodox environment of the Baghdad caliphate, as Yasser Tabbaa has studied in detail (Tabbaa 1985, p. 61–74).

The mausoleum of Nūr al-Dīn from the second half of the twelfth century is still in Damascus (Fig. 6.2a). The sultan’s tomb lies under its *muqarnaṣ* dome. The list of twelfth–fifteenth-century mausoleums with *muqarnaṣ* domes would be interminable, from Islamic Iran to Christian



**Fig. 6.2** (a) Mausoleum of Nūr al-Dīn. Damascus, twelfth century. (b) Royal Chapel. Cathedral of Toledo, 1374. (c) Alhambra. Palace of the Lions, Kings Hall. Detail. (d) The fountain room. Zisa (Palermo), twelfth century (Photos by the author)

Spain. The existence of this type of structure (including the Crown of Castile) was well-known in the West. The church of San Andrés in Toledo houses two beautiful funerary areas, both covered by *muqarnaş* domes, very likely from the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, the oldest ones preserved of Castile. The same can be seen in the cathedrals of Cordoba and Toledo (Fig. 6.2b), where there are two royal chapels with *muqarnaş* domes, founded by Enrique II in 1371 and 1374, respectively. The kings Alfonso XI and Fernando IV are buried in the royal chapel of Cordoba, and Enrique II, Juan I and Enrique III were buried in the royal chapel of Toledo.<sup>8</sup> Following the death of Isabella I of Castile in 1504 in Medina del Campo, in Valladolid province, she was taken in just three weeks to the monastery of San Francisco in the Alhambra, founded by her in 1495, and her mortal remains were buried under an original and Islamic fourteenth-century Nasrid *muqarnaş* dome. The Crown of Castile thus copied a normal Islamic custom (Ruiz Souza 2018a, p. 173–75).

The first thing that attracts attention inside the Palace of the Lions is the wealth of *muqarnaş* domes, thirteen in all, which cover all of the main rooms without exception.

Of the thirteen *muqarnaş* domed cupolas in the palace, those of the Dos Hermanas and the Abencerrajes are outstanding for their height and complexity, with the former having an octagonal, and the latter a star design. Both clearly allude to the cosmos, as seen in the poems displayed in the rooms (Puerta Vilchez 2010, p. 178, 213–14). The remaining eleven are less complex and not as high. Several of these have watercourses painted among the *muqarnaş* and running down to earth, as though they were rivers. In the Kings Hall, where the painting on the domes is better preserved, it can be seen that the watercourses are parallel zigzags in blue and white. The zigzags are similar to those found on the rims of water basins (the basin in the Lindaraja fountain, or the one in the courtyard of the Cuarto Dorado) and in other fountains and spouts. The painted water descends along small plaster columns under the *muqarnaş* domes. The water seems to fertilise the material and a garden appears next, shown in several fine compositions of plants with stems, leaves and flowers (Fig. 6.2c). The water continues downward, similar to sinuous drawings decorating some of the capitals. The water now becomes real, springing from the ground through spouts in the Dos Hermanas and Abencerrajes rooms and in the East and West galleries of the courtyard. Through four

<sup>8</sup> On the Spanish examples, see Ruiz Souza (2000, p. 9–24).

channels pointing to the four points of the compass, the water reaches the famous fountain, where it is continuously renewed from the mouths of the twelve lions (Ruiz Souza 2018b, p. 83–87).

To sum up, the material (*muqarnaş* domes)—the light, the water and the plant life—are well displayed and ordered in the decoration of the palace. What does the Qur’ān tell us about the Creation? Many of the sūras in the Qur’ān refer to the Creation in one way or another. The layout of the palace, its architecture, the *muqarnaş* domes and ornamentation covering the whole of the interior surfaces continually hearken back to the orthodoxy on “the Creation” studied in the Qur’ān. The text alludes to the fertilising water descending from heaven to Earth, as can be seen in the palace:

“[He] who made for you the earth a bed [spread out] and the sky a ceiling and sent down from the sky, rain and brought forth thereby fruits as provision for you. So do not attribute to Allah equals while you know [that there is nothing similar to Him].” Qur’ān 2: 22

Water that spawns the “garden of content” or the *al-Riyād al-Sa‘īd*, the designation used in the written sources for the Palace of the Lions in the Alhambra (Puerta Vílchez 2010, p. 148).

The presence of *muqarnaş* domes in funerary areas has already been discussed in relation to the image of the Creation. However, it is not always so as can be observed in the Zisa in Palermo or in Sultan Qāytbāy’s *sabīl-kuttāb* in Cairo, to cite just two examples (Ruiz Souza 2017, p. 237–38). In Syria and Egypt, as well as finding *muqarnaş* domes in mausoleums, it is very common for these to be placed at the entrance to religious and clearly philanthropic or devotional places, as a call to the faithful. This is found in myriad *madrasas* and mosques, and in the hospital in Damascus, where medicine was taught besides looking after the sick. A large *muqarnaş* dome is still preserved in the entrance to the Merinid Bou Inania *madrasa* in Fez (fourteenth century), marking a place in the street for all passers-by to pause and absorb during their journey. Its use in mosques, *mihrābs*, mausoleums, etc., reveals the evident respect in which it was held. The element also appears in places linked to governors or the elite of society. In other words, it is connected to spaces relating to virtue; thus, it is no surprise that a logical convergence of interests occurs: funerary and virtuous. It must be remembered that there exist areas of literature and science wherein the courtly qualities of the governor are highlighted—especially wisdom, justice and all the virtues that any gentleman should have. This brings us to the concept of *adab* in the Islamic world (Calvo Capilla 2013, p. 51–78). This can be understood as the

knowledge and qualities, or virtues, that any good sovereign or lord should possess and promote. Similarly, the idea from ancient times of the Islamic *majlis*, which were meetings of wise men, literati and scholars presided over by the sovereign, must be remembered in its widest sense.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising to find funerary spaces linked to teaching, science and wisdom, with the ultimate goal being to merge with “Creation” in perfect harmony (Ruiz Souza 2018b, p. 80–81, 87–89).

In the recent past, we have had frequent occasion to defend the functionality of the Palace of the Lions as Muḥammad V’s space for science and virtue. We believe the library was there, particularly in the Kings Hall. The Abencerrajes Hall has what can be regarded a funerary character, if studied within the context of Islamic architecture. In any case, it must not be forgotten that behind the hall is the *rawḍa*, or funerary garden, holding the tombs of Nasrid sultans. In Cairo, we know that mausoleums such as the Qalāwūn were educational places where books were kept (Behrens-Abouseif 2007, p. 138). In the fountain room of the Zisa in Palermo, there also is an area obviously for virtue and glorifying the governor (Fig. 6.2d). The medieval compartmented recesses are of interest, as they seem to indicate places reserved for books (Caronia 1987, p. 66; Bellafiore 2008, p. 46–52, 121). This is nothing new. Back in the second century, Trajan’s column, which is set between the Latin and Greek libraries in the forum, houses the emperor’s ashes in its base, and Celsus’ library at Ephesus was designed as his mausoleum.

Let us expand this chapter briefly with some notes about the funerary *qubbas*: spaces with a dome and a centralised plan.<sup>10</sup> Funerary *qubbas* connected to religious institutions, as seen in Cairo, are found next to palaces, cemeteries, mosques and all kinds of devotional buildings, from Syria to al-Andalus and Castile. The example of the Chella of Rabat (Morocco) is especially interesting, as it is one of the best royal necropolises in Morocco, where the mausoleums stand next to a *zawiya* and a mosque. It is the main burial site for the Merinid family and conserves the funerary *qubba*—or rather the ruins—of its most famous member, Abū-l-Ḥasan (1331–1351) (Basset and Lévi-Provençal 1922, p. 1–92). This is the most sumptuous funerary building of the dynasty and the whole of fourteenth-century Morocco, with rich decoration (floral, geometric, epigraphic and *muqarnas*) sculpted of stone. Throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth

<sup>9</sup> Cynthia Robinson took note of this in *The Aljafería of Zaragoza* (Robinson 2002).

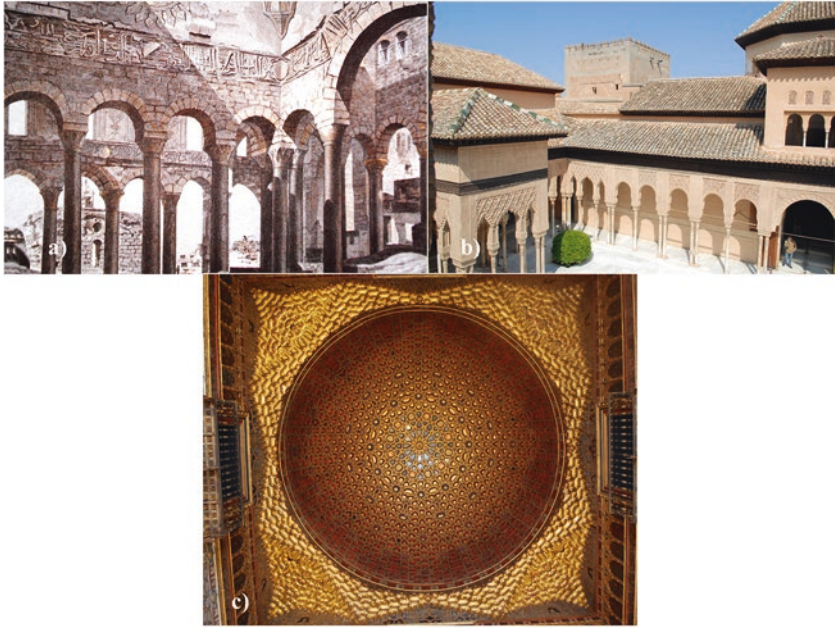
<sup>10</sup> See Introduction in Ruiz Souza (2018a, p. 173–92).

centuries in the Crown of Castile, religious and funerary buildings with a centralised plan appear, reflecting broad influences from Islamic art. One interesting example is in the town of Calera de León, in the province of Badajoz, where the monastery of Tentudía stands on the top of the mountain. It dates back to the thirteenth century—although most of the building seen today was built in the fourteenth century (Mogollón Cano-Cortes 1985, p. 169–86). We are particularly interested in the two large, late fourteenth-century funerary *qubbās*. The surprising thing about the type of structure seen in Tentudía is its evident resemblance to those in Cairo, where large mausoleums flank the ends of the oratory. An example of this is the fine monumental site of Sultan Faraj Ibn Barqūq, built in the early years of the fifteenth century (Creswell 1948, p. 69–77). The style is copied repeatedly in the Mediterranean, such as the famous al-Firdaws *madrasa* in Aleppo, dating to the mid-thirteenth century (Tabbaa 1997, p. 168–82).

### 6.3 THE COMARES PALACE OF THE ALHAMBRA AND THE ROYAL ALCAZAR OF SEVILLE. THE *IWĀN AL-KABĪR* IN CAIRO AND THE ARCHITECTURE OF POWER. AN IMPORTANT MISSING ITEM TO CONSIDER

Large domed structures, which sources call *qubbat al-khadrāʾ*, whose green cupolas are clearly visible from a distance, were a basic feature of palace architecture since the beginning of Islam, by both the Umayyads and Abbasids (Bloom 1993, p. 135–45). Even today, all these buildings are a prime and characteristic feature of the monuments of Islam. Mainly found in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, as Nasser Rabbat reminds us for the Mamluk era, the term *qubba* would end up having a more funerary and religious than a civil meaning. This was a similar architectural structure (where the central area was highlighted by a large dome) that was used for political purposes, as the term *iwān* was eventually used for both cases (Rabbat 2010, p. 125–38).

The Cairo Citadel was developed by the Ayyubids, and more particularly by the Mamluks (Rabbat 1995), and held the *Iwān al-Kabīr*—no longer in existence, but without doubt one of the most emblematic buildings of its time in the whole of the Mediterranean (Fig. 6.3a). Its solid, square shape with a dome stood out over the lower part, which was lighter in appearance due to large open arches. The great *iwān al-Nāṣir* stood out



**Fig. 6.3** (a) *Iwān al-Kabīr*, fourteenth century (*Description de l'Égypte* 1809). (b) Comares Tower from the Court of the Lions. (c) Ambassadors Hall. Alcazar of Seville. Dome of the fifteenth century (Photos by the author)

from the other buildings in the Citadel and became legendary throughout the Mediterranean basin. Studies show that it was even copied in the Doge of Venice's palace (Howard 2006, p. 72–89), and its visual impact reached Granada and Seville, as will be seen.

Although it seems that it might have made use of previous buildings, the Great *Iwān* took on its definitive aspect in the second quarter of the fourteenth century, under the patronage of Sultan al-Nāṣir. The layout had a nave as a portico, which opened into another three, with the centre covered by a huge green dome, the main feature of the building, together with the large columns shaping the interior and brought from pre-Islamic edifices. It stood separately from the other palace buildings within the Citadel. The Great *Iwān* was the throne room, coronation room, used to receive embassies, the court of justice or *dār al-'adl*, the banqueting and

theatre hall; from there, the sultan occasionally attended military parades held outside its walls (Behrens-Abouseif 1988, p. 25–79).

It must be remembered that some buildings of the mid-fourteenth century may have contained features obviously taken from the Cairo *iwān*. The great 45 metre Comares Tower in the Alhambra, which rises above the north wall of the city-palace, is the most impressive echo of the Great *Iwān* of Cairo (Fig. 6.3b). The building is the strongest symbol of the power of the sultan in the Alhambra. The Comares Tower has the same square shape from outside the Citadel, but becomes lighter when seen from the interior (from the Arrayanes courtyard) as there is a porticoed gallery running in front. The interior is dominated by the large Comares Hall, or *qubba*, holding the monarch's throne in a central recess on the north side.<sup>11</sup> The impressive Comares Hall, also known as the Ambassadors Hall, is a square with sides slightly over 11 metres long, and is the palace's most important space for political glorification in the whole of the Alhambra. The surprise is even greater when looking up to see the spectacular wooden ceiling, comprising more than 8000 pieces of polychromed wood in lattices, representing the seven heavens of the Qur'ān. Although the great hall dates back to the reign of Yūsuf I, it was his son, Muḥammad V who contributed the final touches by adding it to the palace he built. It is a multi-function room used to receive ambassadors, as well as for all kinds of ceremonies, spectacles and celebrations.

There is something very similar in the Ambassadors Hall in the Alcazar of Seville, built by Peter I in the third quarter of the fourteenth century and renewed by Juan II in the fifteenth century (Fig. 6.3c). It is a reminder of the Cairo *Iwān* in its horizontal and vertical alignment, as it is a square, domed space, opening up through arches on columns onto rectangular aisles flanking the central area on three sides, as occurs in the Egyptian building (Ruiz Souza 2004a, p. 78–83).

The square, domed central space, such as the one studied here, in the Great *Iwān* of Cairo—whose function is clearly political and for display—elucidates that in al-Andalus and Crown of Castile in the late Middle Ages, large areas for displaying power were also centralised, square and standing

<sup>11</sup> The architectural unit of the North side of Comares Palace, consisting of the rectangular Sala de la Barca that opens on to the square Comares Hall creates what in architecture is called *babw* or an inverted T. This is a space linked to the architecture of power from ancient times, such as that of the palaces in Constantinople.

out from the rest: Torres of Medina de Pomar, Casa Olea of Seville, Corral de Don Diego of Toledo, Alcazar of Guadalajara, etc.

#### 6.4 WHY DID CASTILE ACCEPT THE ISLAMIC ART IN ITS OWN MESSAGES? MOZARABS OF TOLEDO: ARABISATION AND ISLAMISATION

It is very important to explain the previous question to understand why the most important Islamic monuments of al-Andalus were preserved in the kingdom of Castile and why the Islamic art could be taken over by Christian promoters. We can explain everything with a single example: San Roman church (Toledo) (Fig. 6.4a).

First, a reminder of the theoretical approach developed by the archbishop of Toledo, Jiménez de Rada (Linehan 1993, p. 313–84; Pick 2004, p. 73–79), and King Alfonso X in the thirteenth century following the victory of Christian soldiers in Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212 against the Almohad empire of Seville (Márquez Villanueva 1994; Rucquoi 1993, p. 77–88). Both were capable of designing a complete political project for the future that made it possible to integrate Hispanic cultural diversity in which al-Andalus also had a place (Ruiz Souza 2015, p. 219–29).

A great political project was implemented in the church of San Roman in Toledo in the second quarter of the thirteenth century, when Jiménez de Rada was the city's archbishop and where the past was reclaimed in order to smooth the way to the future.<sup>12</sup> The church showed the need to resolve the conflict in the city's Christian population by using architectural qualities of the building and its paintings for the unification, or peaceful coexistence of the two rival Christian liturgies existing in the city—the Roman or French ritual imposed on the city in the eleventh century after Alfonso VI conquered it, and the Hispanic ritual, also known as Visigothic or Toledan, which was of pre-Islamic origin. In his chronicle, *Rebus Hispaniae*, Jiménez de Rada laments the loss of the Hispanic liturgy after Alfonso VI's conquest of the city (Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada 1987, VI: XXV, p. 35). There is a tribute to the Mozarab community in the San Roman church, as well as a reference to the fact that there were two rituals. Former Roman and Visigothic material (*spolia*) was used and large horseshoe arches were put up. These were painted with a radial pattern to

<sup>12</sup>About Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada and Toledo, see Dodds (2007, p. 215–44); Pick (2004, p. 73–79).





**Fig. 6.4** (a) Church of San Román (Toledo), thirteenth century. (b) Relief of the Giralda, Villanueva de Gama (Burgos), 1499. (c) Church of San Andrés, Aguilar de Campos (Valladolid), fifteenth century (Photos by the author). (d) Detail of the church of San Jerónimo (Madrid), before its restoration in the nineteenth century. Drawing by Miguel Sobrino González. Courtesy of the artist

divide the voussours above the impost line, similar to pre-Islamic horseshoe arches, in an obvious allusion to the late Roman Christian origins of the city that the Mozarab community wished to join. The paintings, done together and at the same date as the church was built (Rallo Gruss 2002, p. 277–79), show a combination of inscriptions in Latin and Arabic. Arabic was the identifying language of the Christians (Mozarabs) who adhered to the Hispanic ritual under Islamic rule of the city between the eighth and eleventh centuries, and unsurprisingly, this community gradually became Arabised over the four centuries of Andalusi dominance.<sup>13</sup> After Alfonso VI's arrival in 1086, the city became the face of the reformed Roman ritual promoted by the monarchy and Cluniac monks as a sign of the Europeanisation of the Hispanic kingdoms (Rubio Sadia 2006, p. 9–35), which marked an unbridgeable gap with the former ancient and conservative liturgy of the Mozarabs. The same church in Toledo also shows the fathers of the Hispanic church (St. Isidoro and St. Leandro), together with those identified with the Roman reform (St. Gregory and St. Bernard) (Ruiz Souza 2015, p. 219–29). Arabic displayed in the church of San Roman, or others such as Cristo de la Luz also in Toledo, proves that—through this language—the former Christian community could be mentioned and identified. For instance, in Toledo, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, new Christians from northern Spain only spoke Spanish and Latin, but if a Christian spoke Arabic, it meant his/her Christian origin was at the beginning of Christianity in the city. Surprisingly, the Arabic had become a prestige symbol for Christians.

The next step was led by Alfonso X the Wise. Alfonso X's *scriptorium* started the *Estoria de España* (Fernández-Ordóñez 2000, p. 219–60; *Primera Crónica General de España* 1977), which lists, in chronological order, events and monuments from the pagan, Christian, Hebrew and Andalusi Spain. Alfonso the Wise noted the multicultural roots of his idea of Spain. The *Estoria* starts in Seville with the appearance of Hercules and ends in the same city with Fernando III's arrival. It gives an excellent account of the start of the Arabisation of the Spain of Late Antiquity, before the birth of Islam, by telling us how, shortly after the Arabs arrived, the Mozarabs translated the Holy Scriptures into Arabic, their language (*Primera Crónica General de España* 1977, chapter 571). Arabisation and Islamisation have different meanings. Arabisation does not necessarily have anything to do with religion, as already explained. Christian

<sup>13</sup>About the Mozarab community, see Aillet (2010).

promoters were able to differentiate between Arabisation and Islamisation in medieval Castile, and because of that, for instance, Alfonso VIII and Enrique I printed money in Arabic in Toledo in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The mosque of Cordoba could normally be reused as a Christian cathedral when it was christianised, and a *muqarnas* dome could be understood as a general symbol of Creation by Muslims and Christians. Only later, in a second moment, the artistic heritage of al-Andalus had been considered their own in the Crown of Castile and it was deliberately preserved. Without doubt, the best document explaining the uniqueness and cultural diversity of the kingdom of Castile, and which explains the foundations that made it possible to deliberately conserve al-Andalus heritage for the future, is the marble epitaph that Alfonso X ordered to be placed on the tomb of his father, Fernando III, in the Seville cathedral—upon his death in 1252. It contains the same text praising the monarch in the four languages used in his territory: Latin, Arabic, Hebrew and Spanish. These texts are joined with vertical bands and decorated with the castles and lions of royal heraldry. It is difficult to find a comparable document in the Middle Ages that so successfully expresses an inclusive discourse on the cultural wealth of the kingdom of Castile and Leon. Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada and Alfonso X were able to develop their projects in the thirteenth century because they understood what Mozarabic Toledo meant in the previous century, when the famous School of Translators of Toledo began working with Archbishop Don Raimundo (1126–1152). Scholars from the three religions opened the Ancient World to Europe because they translated systematically Arabic manuscripts (Philosophy, Mathematics, Astronomy, Astrology, Medicine, etc.) into Latin and Castilian.<sup>14</sup>

From the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, Italy found its cultural roots in ancient Roma, whereas in Castile, al-Andalus would end by being treated in the same way as the Roman heritage. Sancho Ortiz de Matienzo, treasurer of the Casa de Contratación of Seville and canon of Seville cathedral, ordered a relief of the Giralda, the most important Almohad construction in al-Andalus, to be used as the foundation stone of his chapel in the parish church of his birthplace, Villasana de Mena, in the north of the province of Burgos, in 1499, as stated in the inscription that still surrounds the image of the famous minaret on the stone (Fig. 6.4b). The most emblematic building in Almohad architecture now formed part of

<sup>14</sup>These issues are developed in Ruiz Souza (2019, p. 129–32).

the treasurer's most heartfelt collective memory at the end of the fifteenth century (Torres Balbás 1941, p. 216–29).

Around 1500, Gutierrez de Cárdenas, politician and humanist and a leading figure in the court of Isabella the Catholic, placed a whole series of capitals from the Cordoba caliphate on the great façade of the collegiate church at Torrijos (Toledo) (Pavón Maldonado 1966, p. 363–72), at the behest of himself and his wife, Teresa Enríquez. They were part of a classicist programme in keeping with the singularity of Spain in the first years of the sixteenth century. Umayyad Cordoba now formed part of Antiquity in modern Spain. It is difficult to find anything similar anywhere else, even in the peninsula. According to a study by Serra Desfilis for the kingdom of Aragon, there was no one path to research the arts of al-Andalus in Spain well into the late Middle Ages (Serra Desfilis 2013, p. 33–60), nor in the Modern Age, as Antonio Urquizar has recently researched (Urquizar 2017).

The Nasrid Alhambra is also seen on many Christian buildings of the monarchy and nobility by around 1500. To give but a few examples, the entrance gates to the city-palace of Granada are copied on access points to walls (gate preserved in Las Huelgas Reales in Valladolid) or the portals to some Spanish churches, such as San Andrés de Aguilar de Campos in Valladolid, founded by the Admiral of Castile and Enrique II's son, Fadrique Enríquez and built in the first half of the fifteenth century (Tovar Llorente 1932–1933, p. 16–26; Pérez de Castro 2002, p. 243–259) (Fig. 6.4c). The façades, especially the Western one, are a deliberate reminder of the monumental gates of the Alhambra, and the Siete Suelos gate in particular. The Comares Tower, in the early sixteenth century, inspired the church of San Jerónimo of Madrid. This church was a very important symbol of the monarchy since the Asturias Prince was recognised there as heir of the King of Spain (Fig. 6.4d).

## 6.5 SOME CONCLUSIONS

Naturally, Castile and Granada are not exceptions and we could probably draw other examples from the same period in the Mediterranean region. For example, the spectacular nature of the great gates of access to the cities erected in the fifteenth century, such as Valencia, cannot be forgotten. Although the art of al-Andalus is an extremely interesting chapter in European art and Western Islamic art, we need to go beyond the Iberian Peninsula, to Cairo, Napoli or Venice—cities connected by merchants and clear economic interests—where we can observe the continuity of

scenographic elements with deep origins in Antiquity and that demonstrate how they share the same visual culture of power and great deal of common ground. As noted earlier, the Doge's Palace in Venice was also built with reference to the Great Mamluk *Iwān* of Cairo, from the fourteenth century, but in Gothic style. Sometimes the forms and the messages had different speeds. We should think about this. It is possible to see an Islamic space or an Islamic political message built with the artistic forms of late Gothic or even Renaissance forms (Ruiz Souza 2004b, p. 17–43). The messages and the artistic forms do not always travel together.

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PART III

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Andalusi Cultural Legacy in the  
Iberian Societies



# In the Shadow of Toledo, Seville, and Granada: On the Historic Significance of Murcia for the Transmission of Islamic Knowledge in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries

*Michael A. Conrad*

Murcia always had a special status for King Alfonso X of Castile and León (r. 1252–1284), whose reign was characterized by one of the most important periods in Spanish history for the transmission of Islamic knowledge into the Latin West (Alonso Navarro 1997; Torres Fontes and Torres Suárez 1984). Alfonso X had successfully besieged the city in 1243 on behalf of his father, Fernando III, who had fallen ill. By 1245, Alfonso X managed to also conquer the three other cities of the region that had not yet submitted to his rule: Cartagena, Murcia's port, Mula, and Lorca (Salvador Martínez 2010, p. 43).

Many historians agree that it was here, in Murcia, that Alfonso X for the first time received deeper insight into the achievements of Islamic

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M. Marcos Cobaleda (ed.), *Artistic and Cultural Dialogues in the Late Medieval Mediterranean*, Mediterranean Perspectives,

[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53366-3\\_7](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53366-3_7)

culture. The key moment, so it is said in medieval chronicles, was his encounter with polymath Muḥammad Abū Bakr al-Riqūṭī (Márquez Villanueva 2004, p. 172–73). Taken by his great erudition, the king supported him financially and bequeathed many honours upon him. Several scholars have seen this encounter as the initial point of Alfonso X's life-long fascination for Islamic scholarship, sciences and literature, upon which he would base many of the works compiled at his *scriptorium* (Burns 1990; O'Callaghan 1993, p. 169; Montoya Martínez and Domínguez Rodríguez 1999; Salvador Martínez 2010, 73 and 321; Fernández Fernández 2013). On many occasions (1254, 1257, 1271–1272, 1274) his court would even reside in the city, and in his will, the king ordered that either his whole body or his intestines should be buried at Santa María la Real of Murcia. For this purpose, a tomb in the *capilla mayor* of said cathedral was constructed in 1526 to receive Alfonso X's heart (Pérez Martín 1997, p. 128).

These indicators underscore the importance of Murcia for Alfonso X and the transfer of Islamic knowledge to the West (Burke 2002, 2009; Roeck 2007). And still, when it comes to analysing the cultural dialogue between East and West, Murcia is usually overshadowed by Seville, Toledo and Córdoba. This is all the more regrettable as its constant status as a borderland—first between Islamic and Christian territories and then between Granada, Aragon, and Castile—made it reside under the constant influences from different parts of Iberia and beyond. In addition, throughout its history the Murcia region had enjoyed several phases of—at least relative—independence from hegemonic forces, which meant an important precondition for its equally independent and unique development of scholarly erudition.

To better understand this development, the focus of this contribution will be on the networks of patrons and scholars in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Abu-Lughod 1989; Remie Constable 1994; Castells 2004; Osterhammel and Petersson 2005; Conrad 2017; Dangler 2017). Without being able to fill all gaps, the following overview will help to better understand the *longue durée* of knowledge transmission in Murcia and how, at the end of the thirteenth century, it had been able to bring forth some of the most outstanding intellectual figures al-Andalus had ever seen, particularly including Abū Bakr al-Riqūṭī, whose encounter with Alfonso X would launch the last stage in its history of Islamic erudition.

## 7.1 THE REIGN OF MUḤAMMAD IBN MARDANĪSH, MURCIA'S GLORY

During the government of the Muḥammad ibn Mardanīsh (r. 1147–1172), or the *rey Lobo* as he appears in Christian chronicles, Murcia experienced the phase of its greatest splendour as the capital of *Sharq* al-Andalus. During the decline of Almoravid power, Ibn Mardanīsh had not only succeeded in seizing control over Murcia and Valencia but also in extending it over a vast territory that around the year 1160 included the cities of Albarracín, Valencia, Alcira, Játiva, Denia, Alicante, Elche, Orihuela, Murcia, Cartagena, Lorca, Jaén, Écija, Carmona, and Almería, thus sharing borders with Aragon, Castile, and the Almohad Caliphate. Throughout his life, Ibn Mardanīsh refused to submit to the new Berber dynasty of the Almohads and was indeed able to remain in power even after a serious defeat of his Christian mercenaries in 1165. He was most probably born in Fraga (Vallvé 1979, p. 59), where his father had been governor in 1124 or 1125. As a ruler, he enjoyed a very high reputation and would exchange diplomatic gifts with Henry II of England (r. 1154–1189) and pay tributaries to Alfonso VII of Castile (r. 1126–1157), Ramon Berenguer IV of Barcelona (r. 1131–1162), as well as the Sea Republics of Pisa and Genova (Jiménez Castillo 2013, p. 214).

In those days, Murcia experienced great wealth, based on the high quality of its agricultural products, which it could grow due to a highly refined irrigation system, as well as its outstanding gold coin, the “morabantino lupino,” which between the twelfth and fourteenth century would be accepted as currency all around the Western Mediterranean (Matéu y Llopis 1988, p. 93–116; Martínez 2015, p. 43–57). Ibn Mardanīsh's power found its architectural expression in the castle of Monteagudo, a representative country estate about four kilometres northeast of Murcia (Navarro Palazón and Jiménez Castillo 2012). Merging the concepts of fortified castle and residential palace, with its strict geometric ground plan Monteagudo elegantly blended Maghrebian and Iberian traditions (Arnold 2017, p. 189–94). Ibn Mardanīsh also built a recreational palace (*al-Dār al-Ṣuġrā*) in Murcia that later became the Monastery of Santa

**Fig. 7.1** Small fragment of painting on plaster depicting a flutist playing on an Arabic flute called *mizmar*, twelfth century. Monastery of Santa Clara la Real, Murcia (Photograph: Ángel M. Felicísimo)



Clara la Real and today houses a museum. From the times of Ibn Mardānīsh, only a few fragments of the once beautifully painted wall decorations with figurative motifs have survived (Fig. 7.1) (Arnold 2017, p. 228–30). Remains of the *miḥrāb* of the oratory of Murcia’s *Alcazar mayor* have survived as well, which are held at the Museo de la Iglesia de San Juan de Dios (Navarro Palazón and Jiménez Castillo 1995; González Cavero 2013).

Another means for expressing his power was the employment of scholars, writers, and artisans, the high numbers of which mirrored his splendour. There had of course been intellectuals in Murcia before—in the tenth century, Ibn al-Faraḍī was able to give the names of 24 scholars (Martínez 2015, p. 20)—yet scholarship would not peak before Ibn Mardānīsh’s reign. Of the 96 scholars identified by Victoria Aguilar, some

would be employed at his court directly, while others would teach in mosques.<sup>1</sup>

One of the greatest masters in twelfth-century Murcia was ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Ḥubaysh al-Mursī (1110–1155?), who had many followers (Aguilar 2016, p. 15, 16, 22–29, 34). He was known for his great erudition on the *ḥadīth*, as well as his wide knowledge of Arabic, history, genealogy and other disciplines. For all we know, Ibn Ḥubaysh was born in Almería, which had been the location of an important school of Sufism (Abrahamov 2014, p. 98; Bennison 2016, p. 244). With his teacher, Abū ‘Alī al-Ṣadafī (1052–1120), a legal scholar from Saragossa, it is possible to retrace an even longer chain of transmission. After settling in Murcia for some years after a journey to the Orient in 1097, most likely to Mecca, al-Ṣadafī worked as a judge for more than a decade and disseminate works he had learned about on his way, especially the collections of *ḥadīth* by al-Bujārī and al-Tirmidī. Al-Ṣadafī died in the battle of Cutanda in 1120. He had not only been teacher to Ibn Ḥubaysh but also Muḥammad ibn Ḥamīd (1119–1190), Ibn Sa‘āda (1102–1170), and Ibn al-Faras (1131–1202), all of whom rank among the greatest masters of the era (Aguilar 2016, p. 22). Ibn Ḥubaysh himself had come from Almería, which he had left after its—albeit short-lived—capture by Christian troops in 1147. After some years in Alcira (1147–1161), he resettled to Murcia and became a *khaṭīb*, whose obligation was to deliver Friday prayers. In 1178, he became a judge as well. His funeral was organized by the Almohad governor of the city, Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar al-Rashīd, who allied with Alfonso VIII of Castile (r. 1158–1214) and might have attempted to set up an independent caliphate similar to that of Ibn Madarnīsh (Rodríguez Figueroa 2004; Kennedy 1996, p. 240; Aguilar 2016, p. 22, 34).

One of Ibn Ḥubaysh’s closest friends was aforementioned Muḥammad ibn Ḥamīd. Originally from Valencia, this judge would spend his last years in Murcia, teaching Arabic and the Qur’ān. After his death, he was buried next to the tomb of his life-long friend (Aguilar 2016, p. 16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 40). Of Ibn Ḥubaysh’s many disciples, Yaḥyà Ibn Baqī is the only one we know about with origins in North Africa. He was born in Salé in 1117 and died in Murcia in 1168. His existence indicates that the

<sup>1</sup>Among those employed at the royal court we find his military judge, Muḥammad al-Tujībī, Abū l-Qāsim (Cordoba, 1118-Seville, 1175), his secretary Muḥammad al-Sulamī al-Kātib, known as al-Miknāsī (d. Marrakech, 1184), or the mentor of his son, ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad Ibn Sahl (Granada, 1097-Murcia, 1176); for more biographical information see Aguilar 2016.

movement of scholars across the Strait of Gibraltar might have been much more common than the sources say (Aguilar 2016, p. 38).

Among Ibn Ḥubaysh's other students one finds lecturers on the Qur'ān, such as Muḥammad b. Yaḥyà al-Anṣārī, born in Murcia in 1220, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Šāmit, Abū Ja'far (d. 1193), who taught mathematics and Arabic in Murcia, and 'Abd al-Raḥmān Abū Bakr al-Mursī (1152–1202), who was judge in Denia and preached at Murcia's Friday mosque (Aguilar 2016, p. 33–41). Muḥammad b. 'Īsā b. Idrīs (1155–1204), on the other hand, is notable for his family ties, as he was a descendant of the many-branched Banū Idrīs,<sup>2</sup> to which also the famous geographer Muḥammad al-Idrīsī (ca. 1100–1166) belonged, who would be employed at the court of Norman King Roger II of Sicily (r. 1130–1154) in Palermo and create the *Tabula Rogeriana*, the most accurate world map of his age. Muḥammad 'Īsā Ibn Idrīs was related to the famous poet Ṣafwān b. Idrīs (1164–1201) and would become judge in Algeciras, Játiva, and Denia. It is furthermore said that he had once met Ibn Rushd (Averroes) in Cordoba (Aguilar 2016, p. 19, 20, 38).

Another influential master was Muḥammad b. Yūsuf Abū 'Abd Allāh, who is more frequently referred to as Ibn Sa'āda al-Mursī (1102–1170) (Aguilar 2016, p. 16–19, 24–27, 40). Ibn Sa'āda studied in Murcia with Abū 'Alī al-Ṣadafī (Saragossa, 1068–1120) and Ibn Abū Ja'far (1155–1203). After the fall of the Almoravids, he would settle in Murcia and later become judge in Játiva, where he would stay until his death. Inclined toward Sufism, he is said to have been an excellent preacher, with his expertise including Qur'ānic studies, *kalām* and the *ḥadīth*, as well as law, philology, and theology. Lastly, Muḥammad Abū Bakr al-Umawī al-Mursī (1124–1202) is noteworthy for his opposition to Ibn Ḥubaysh's teachings. At different times in his life, he would be judge in Murcia, Valencia, Játiva, and Orihuela, and preside over Murcia's council in 1145, when he was only 21 years old (Aguilar 2016, p. 38).

## 7.2 AFTER IBN MARDANĪSH: MURCIA IN CRISIS

The death dates of some of the scholars active during Ibn Mardanīsh's reign lead us into the 1220s, which marked the definitive end of political stability under the Almohads. Before his death in 1172, Ibn Mardanīsh

<sup>2</sup>As the *nasab* indicates, the Banū Idrīs claimed to be descendants of the Idrisid dynasty that had ruled over Morocco from 788 to 974.



had asked his sons to accept Almohad sovereignty after his demise, causing that Murcia would be part of the Caliphate for the next roughly 40 years. During this time, its hegemony was not to remain unchallenged, although its real decline would not set in before the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212). Almohad legitimacy eroded even more in the course of subsequent dynastic struggles: in 1224, ‘Abd Allāh al-‘Ādil, a nephew of Caliph ‘Abd al-Wāḥid I (r. 1224), launched an upheaval in Murcia and seized the title of caliph for himself (r. 1224-1227). The waning of Almohad power led to discontent among the people in Murcia. As a result, Muḥammad ibn Hūd, a descendant of the Banū Hūd of Saragossa, organized an upheaval in the Valley of Ricote and marched into the city of Murcia on August 4, 1228. Contemporaries identified Ibn Hūd with the messianic figure of *mahdī*, while he would take on the *kunyah* al-Mutawakkil (“having faith in God”) and declare himself the true ruler over al-Andalus (r. 1228-1237). Ibn Hūd’s short-lived government marked a new period, during which Murcia would become one of the most important protagonists in the Islamic West in the late thirteenth century. In fact, Ibn Hūd succeeded in reconquering almost all al-Andalus by 1228 but would be eventually defeated by Christian troops and assassinated at the gates of Almería in 1238. His son Abū Bakr al-Wātiq would succeed him but be unable to stay in power for more than seven months, followed by the similarly short rule of ‘Azīz b. Jattāb. The subsequent government of Zayyān ibn Mardanīsh, a son of the previous king, would not last for much longer than two years (1239–1241) either, after which he would be disposed in favour of one of Ibn Hūd’s relatives, Muḥammad ibn Hūd Bahā’ al-Dawla, who would govern the city from 1241 to 1259 and negotiate the peace treaty with Castile after Alfonso X’s successful military campaign (Molina López 1980; Jiménez Castillo 2013, p. 217, 219–20).

After Murcia’s conquest, Alfonso X redefined the region’s status as a protectorate and reinstated the rule of the Banū Hūd as governors (Torres Fontes 1995–1996). Muḥammad ibn Hūd Bahā’ al-Dawla was thus succeeded by his son Abū Ja‘far (1260–1263), who then would be followed by his own son Muḥammad Ja‘far (1263–1264). This caused unrest in the population, for many favoured Ibn Hūd’s son, Abū Bakr al-Wātiq, who reappeared on the political stage 27 years after his disposal. Subsequently, Muḥammad Ja‘far was dethroned in 1264, who thereafter sent his secretary, Abū Ṭālib ibn Sab‘īn, the brother of the famous Sufi scholar discussed further below, to Alfonso X and the Pope in Rome to complain

about the king's infringements of the Treaty of Alcaraz, yet to no avail. In their frustration, the people of Murcia turned to Muḥammad I of Granada (r. 1232–1272), who seized the opportunity to provoke an anti-Castilian rebellion in the city led by al-Wātiq (Jiménez Castillo 2013, p. 223). However, this riot, known as the Mudéjar Revolt, failed, and the city would be reconquered by Alfonso X's father-in-law, James I of Aragon (r. 1213–1276), in 1266. After the city's defeat, James I ordered it to be divided into two sectors, with the western one reserved for Christians, the eastern for Muslims (Torres Fontes 1969, 22, doc. XXIII). The same year, James I handed the city over to Alfonso X, who ordered that Muslims should henceforth reside in the suburb of Arrixaca, while the Christians would occupy the *madīna*.<sup>3</sup> It was for the first time that ghettos had been established in a Castilian town, which would turn into prototypes for those established much later, after the programs of 1391 (Salvador Martínez 2010, p. 171; Jiménez Castillo 2013, p. 224–25). Another consequence of the failed Mudéjar Rebellion was that Murcia lost its status as an Islamic kingdom. Instead, it became fully integrated into the Castilian Crown and governed by the newly created office of the *adelantado mayor*. Consequently, 'Abd Allāh ibn Hūd's title was reduced to that of "el Rey de los moros de Arrixaca en Murcia" (O'Callaghan 2011, p. 52).

Despite the political instability throughout most of the thirteenth century, the intellectual scene in Murcia nonetheless flourished. The governor of Orihuela, Abū Ja'far b. 'Iṣām, established a special council of *'ulamā'* called *wizāra 'Iṣāmiyya*, which he presided and that was.

"one of the most prestigious political and literary circles of al-Andalus in the thirteenth century" (Molina López 1981, p. 170–71),<sup>4</sup>

thereby reaffirming that scholarship did by no means cease and would still find patronage of the political elite, albeit at a much smaller, more local level. The loosening grip of the Berber dynasties' orthodoxy implied greater intellectual freedom—something that certainly had already been true for the city's second *ṭā'ifa* under Ibn Madarnīsh. However, it cannot be ignored that the political unrest made many leave and search refuge elsewhere. One of them was Ḥāzīm al-Qarṭājannī, born in Cartagena in 1211. During his studies in Murcia, Granada, and Seville, he would

<sup>3</sup>Arrixaca is mentioned in the lyrics to *cantiga* 169 of the *Cantigas de Santa María* and depicted in the accompanying miniatures; see O'Callaghan 1998, p. 121–25.

<sup>4</sup>"[...] uno de los círculos políticos y literarios más prestigiosos de al-Andalus en el siglo XIII," translation by author.

discover Greek philosophy through the works of al-Fārābī, Avicenna, and Averroes. After Ibn Hūd's failed rebellion, he exiled to Morocco and Tunis, where he would die in 1269. There, he composed the *Qaṣīda Maqṣūra*, whose 1006 verses are mostly devoted to the pleasures of youth and the nostalgia in respect to his lost home, al-Andalus (García Gómez 1933; Martínez 2015, p. 40).

Yet even Christian control over the region would not stop its erudition. In 1252, Muḥammad b. Hudhayl constructed an *azafea* (*ṣafīḥa zarqālliyya*), a special type of astrolabe, in Murcia, today preserved at the Real Academia de Ciencias y Artes de Barcelona (RACAB) (Martínez 2015, p. 39–42). Among those who at first stayed, one also finds the historian and poet Ibn Rashīq, who enjoyed a profound knowledge of *adab*, who is said to have invented a circular game of chess (Velázquez Basanta 2007, p. 132). Today, however, he is mostly known for having been the counterpart in a theologian dispute with Raimundo Martí, a disciple of Albert the Great, about the idea that the Qur'ān is not imitable (Vernet 2001, p. 262–63). The Mudéjar Revolt ended his days in Murcia, making him first move to Ceuta, and then to Almería and Granada.

### 7.3 THE VALLEY OF RICOTE AS AN INCUBATOR OF ISLAMIC ERUDITION

Thus, the political instability of the thirteenth century set the stage for some of the greatest intellectual figures medieval Murcia had ever seen, many of whom were affiliated with Sufism, which is why it is appropriate to first examine the high influence the religious movement had on the region. In fact, one of the most important Sufi masters, Abū l-'Abbās al-Mursī (1219–1286), who is today known for the beautiful mosque of his name in Alexandria, had originally been born Murcia and later became the successor of Abū-l-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Shādhilī (1196–1258), the founder of the Shādhilīya brotherhood. Ibn Aḥlā, the governor of Lorca until 1247, had been a Sufi master himself, and aspired to base his administration on Sufi principles (Fierro 1998, p. 172; Fierro 1994, p. 895). Of course, mention must also be made of Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn 'Arabī (1165–1240), who is usually plainly—albeit erroneously—referred to as Ibn al-'Arabī. Born in Murcia, he is known among Sufi practitioners as their “greatest master” and genuine Saint. His father, 'Alī Ibn Muḥammad, had served in Ibn Mardaniṣh's army but relocated from Murcia to Seville

after his death, so that Ibn ‘Arabī cannot be really counted in as a Murcian scholar (Elmore 1997; Westerveld 2014, p. 41–43).

Aside from Ibn ‘Arabī, two of the most influential scholars born and active in Murcia were Ibn Sab‘īn (1217–1271) and al-Riqūṭī, with whom this article began. They both saw the light of day in the Ricote Valley, which at the time comprised of the localities of Fauran (today: Abarán), al-Darrax, Negra, Oxos (today: Ojós), Ricote, Oleya (today: Ulea), and Asnete (today: Villanueva de Segura). Manuela Marín writes that the earliest use of the word “sufi” in al-Andalus is attested for the tenth century (Marín 1994, p. 890), and Sufism will have gained ground in Ricote Valley around the same time, with the local community developing more radical tendencies than elsewhere in the Islamic world (Guichard 2001, p. 169). Ibn al-Khaṭīb mentions the “people of Wādī Riqūṭ” in his writings when comparing different Sufi doctrines, adding that their teachings as well as those of Ibn Sab‘īn and his disciples were further away from orthodoxy than those of Ibn ‘Arabī (Massignon 1982, p. 331). Ibn Khaldūn (1332–1406) was also aware of the people of Ricote Valley and that they were widely known as heretics (Ibn Khaldūn 1991, p. 135).

The people of the valley played an important part in Ibn Hūd’s upheaval (Fromherz 2012, p. 19–22; Fierro 2016, p. 1–20), who is also noteworthy here for his nephew, Badr al-Dīn Abū l-‘Alī Ḥasan b. Hūd al-Mursī (1235/6–1300), who had been a Sufi master himself and would become the head of a local community of Sab‘īniyyūn, the followers of Ibn Sab‘īn, in Damascus. He had profound knowledge of philosophy and medicine, wrote poetry, and was characterized by a tolerant attitude against Jews and Christians as he “held inner spiritual realisation to be superior to outer religious adscriptions” (Bellver 2017).

### 7.3.1 *Ibn Sab‘īn*

Already in the nineteenth century, M. A. F. Mehren had called Ibn Sab‘īn “one of the last representatives of the Arab ‘Peripatetic’ school” (Mehren 1880; Massignon 1928; Faure 2012). From an early age on, he had received his education in Murcia, and his knowledge would later involve Arabic philology, Islamic sciences, Greek philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, natural philosophy, alchemy, medical literature, and even Christian and Jewish theology (Nasr 1973, p. 78). He was born in 1217 into a well-situated family of Ricote proper or some place within Ricote Valley

(Spallino 2002; Akasoy and Lutz-Bachmann 2005; Akasoy 2007). Tradition has it that three of his teachers had been Ibn Dahhāq (d. 1214/15), also known as Ibn al-Mar'a (d. 1225), and al-Ḥurānī (d. 1143), yet this seems rather unlikely, since Ibn Sabʿīn was born after their deaths, which however does not rule out that their teachings had an influence on him (Spallino 2011, p. 508). Sarah Stroumsa believes that Ibn Sabʿīn's actual teacher was Ibn Aḥlā (d. 1247), with Ibn al-Mar'a being "the teacher of his teacher" (Stroumsa 2019, p. 168). Together with Ibn Muṭarrif al-Khudhāmī (d. 1264), Ibn al-Mar'a and Ibn Aḥlā were affiliated with the Shāḍīliya branch of Sufism established by Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Shūdhī al-Ḥalwī (d. ca. 1203), which propagated the metaphysical principle of "absolute unity" (*al-wahda al-muṭlaqa*) and that had many followers in Murcia, Lorca, and Ricote. Stroumsa furthermore asserts that Ibn al-Mar'a had known the works of Ibn Masarra (d. 931), the first Muslim mystic in al-Andalus, thereby indicating a continued reception of his teachings in the region between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries (Stroumsa 2019, p. 168).

Ibn Sabʿīn lived during a period when the relationship between faith and rational knowledge had become a much-debated issue, not only in al-Andalus, as epitomized by Ibn Rushd and Maimonides, but also throughout Christian Europe, with Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas aspiring to solve this question in their commentary writings on Aristotle. In a similar vein, Ibn Sabʿīn attempted to harmonize Aristotelian philosophy and Islamic mysticism, with the latter showing strong tendencies towards hermetic traditions, especially the works of Hermes Trismegistos, which he had discovered through Dhūl-Nūn al-Miṣrī (d. 859 or 862) (Cook 2012). Ibn Sabʿīn believed that the differences between religions were not ontic but merely formal, as all believers shared the same overall goal—to become one with God. What set them apart merely consisted in the different means believers applied to achieve this goal (Seguini 1992, p. 385). Although his works are characterized by staggering complexity, this did not keep Western scholars from using them. Charles Lohr, for instance, holds that some of Ramon Llull's (ca. 1232–1316) key works, especially his *ars inventiva*, depended on Ibn Sabʿīn, a view that, however, has been met with controversy (Lohr 2000; Akasoy and Fidora 2008). This issue notwithstanding, the work mostly regarded as his masterpiece are the *Sicilian Questions*. Traditionally, this text is usually identified with answers Ibn Sabʿīn gave to four philosophical questions asked by Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, German Emperor and King of Sicily (r. 1220–1250),

concerning (1) the eternity of the world, (2) divine knowledge, (3) the categories, and (4) the nature of the soul. Due to the text's alleged intercultural context, it has been labeled a "symbol on the intellectual relations between medieval Christian Europe and the Islamic world" (Cabanelas 1955, p. 48–49). However, the origin story might be legendary only, and the text originally intended as an introduction for students. Either way, it evidences Ibn Sabʿīn's enormous knowledge, blending together Aristotelianism, Neoplatonic Sufism, and many other elements of Greek and Islamic philosophy; in it, he even discusses Zoroastrianism and Brahman theories of the soul.

### 7.3.2 *Muḥammad al-Riqūṭī*

The development of Murcia's intellectual history analysed so far makes it easier to contextualize the biography of this article's introductory figure, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Riqūṭī al-Mursī. The only reliable source on his life is Ibn al-Khaṭīb's *Iḥāṭa* (Ibn al-Khaṭīb 1975, III, p. 67; Díaz Fajardo 2007, p. 57). However, as this famous vizier of Muḥammad V (r. 1354–1359; 1362–1391) lived a few generations later, it is certain that he never met al-Riqūṭī in person. Moreover, the source does not mention the exact dates of his birth or death either. Nevertheless, what can be gathered from his writings is that he must have died during Muḥammad II's reign (r. 1273–1302). As the scholar's *nisba* gives away, the Sufi community of *wādi Riqūṭī* might have played some role in his formation, even though we know nothing more concrete about his education. Given the great scope of his knowledge, including philosophy, medicine, and the ancient arts, particularly logic, geometry, mathematics, and rhetoric, along with medicine and music, its acquisition must have nonetheless started at an early age, supposedly while he still lived close to his birthplace.

Alfonso X might have listened to some of al-Riqūṭī's lectures in Murcia or the castle of Monteagudo (Salvador Martínez 2010, p. 75), and it seems the king understood the value of al-Riqūṭī's erudition rather immediately. Ibn al-Khaṭīb adds that the king did not only try to attract the scholar with salaries, honours, and awards, but that he even founded a *madrasa* for him in Murcia (Wiegiers 1994, p. 51–52). It is furthermore said that this school, whose function cannot be compared to the later Nasrid *madrasa* in Granada (Bernabé Pons 2007), was open to everyone, regardless their religion (Salvador Martínez 2010, p. 75), an interreligious tolerance that might indicate an influence of the followers of Ibn Sabʿīn.

H. Salvador Martínez confirms that Alfonso X made al-Riqūṭī the head of a school he had founded in Murcia where

[m]any of the Arab language scholars who later worked in Alfonso's *scriptorium* must have been educated [...]. (Salvador Martínez 2010, p. 321)

This *Escuela murciana*, which might be identical with the *madrasa* mentioned by Ibn al-Khaṭīb or a different institution, was probably established in 1269 (Pons Tovar 2010, p. 246). As its head, al-Riqūṭī must have enjoyed some control over the knowledge transmission from Arabic sources, at least indirectly through the people he employed. Of the translators working there, two names are known: Ferrán Domínguez del Aráuigo and Bernaldo del Aráuigo, the latter probably a converted Muslim (Samsó 1981; Fernández Fernández 2013). Even though it cannot be fully reconstructed anymore, it thus seems not unlikely that al-Riqūṭī had effected some decisive influence onto the vast body of compilations commissioned by Alfonso X that were based on Arabic sources and devoted to a multitude of disciplines and subjects, including history, law, literature, astronomy, astrology, magic, games and others, thereby amassing “an erudite corpus unparalleled in Europe in the thirteenth century” (Salvador Martínez 2010, p. 75).

#### 7.4 MURCIA'S LAST GREAT PHASE OF CULTURAL EXCHANGE UNDER ALFONSO X

During the Provincial Chapter of 1265, the Dominican Order, which had established itself in Murcia only a few years after its conquest (ca. 1250), decided to found a school for studies in Arabic and Hebrew (*Studium arabicum et hebraicum*). After the Mudéjar Revolt, Alfonso X donated land and other assets to this institution in two *privilegios rodados* signed in 1270 and 1272 (Martínez Gázquez 1995, p. 58). One of its most important translators was Pedro Gallego (1200–1267) (Martínez Gázquez 1995, p. 60). The Dominican school is usually considered a predecessor of the University of Murcia, whose official date of foundation is April 6, 1272 (Díez de Revenga 1991).

More than ten years earlier, Alfonso X had, with Papal approval, already founded a *studium generale* dedicated to the study of Latin and Arabic (*Estudios y Escuelas Generales de Latino e Aráuigo*) in Seville in 1254, whose founding charter had also been signed by the emir of Granada, the

emir of Niebla, and Muḥammad ibn Hūd, the emir of Murcia, who are all rightfully addressed as Alfonso X's vassals (*vassallo del rey*) (Borrero Fernández et al. 1995, p. 224–25, no. 13). Unlike the Sevillian school, Alfonso X's influence on the Dominican institution in Murcia was indirect at best; yet his financial support clearly demonstrates his vital interest in its proper operation, so that, in combination with his own institution headed by al-Riqūṭī, Murcia turned into one of the most vibrant hubs for the transmission of Arabic and Hebrew knowledge to the Latin West.

### 7.5 CONCLUSION: REBELLIOUS AND RESILIENT

This short examination of the different stages in the history of knowledge transmission in Murcia revealed that the local intellectual landscape reached one of its highest peaks during the twelfth century, when the city served as the capital of Ibn Madarnīsh's *ṭā'ifa*. During this period, its scholarship enjoyed a great reputation across the Western Islamic world and would attract scholars not only from its closest vicinities but even from North Africa. The king's patronage was just as crucial for this development as was its political independence, since it would shield its intellectual milieu from strong orthodox influences, so that even controversial figures such as Ibn Ḥubaysh would be allowed to teach in Murcia. The city's cultural exceptionalism furthermore relates to the strong Sufi influence, whose most unconventional sub-currents were cultivated in the community of Valle del Ricote, where some of Murcia's greatest intellectuals, Ibn Sab'īn and al-Riqūṭī, had their origins. This apparently indicates community's important role as a missing link connecting the great minds of the twelfth century with those of the thirteenth.

In turn, Alfonso X's political efforts before the Mudéjar Revolt indicate that he had wanted to ensure the continuation of Islamic scholarship in Murcia, not least in order to benefit from its achievements. And yet, even after the devastating Mudéjar Revolt, Islamic erudition was able to prevail: much later, in 1461, a cartographer named Ibrāhīm al-Ṭabīb al-Mursī still resided in the city, where he created a map of the Mediterranean today preserved at the Naval Museum of Istanbul (Martínez 2015, p. 41–42). How Murcia's Islamic intellectual culture managed to stay alive in the hostile post-1266 environment is a subject for future investigations. It seems that the government of Don Juan Manuel (1282–1348), Alfonso



X's famous nephew, as Murcia's *adelantado mayor* in 1284 might have marked a period when Islamic scholarship again received some special attention by the political elite (Wacks 2006).

In many ways, Murcia's exceptionalism stemmed from its natural and political geography. For centuries it had been a borderland, at first between al-Andalus and the Christian Kingdoms and then between Granada, Aragon, and Castile. The remoteness of its valleys prevented its overlords, be it either the Almoravids, Almohads or Christians, from executing too much control over the region. This certainly accounts for a major reason why the Ricote Valley would later be home to the last Muslim community to ever be expelled from Spain (Vincent 2015): in fact, the last expulsion order signed by King Felipe III (r. 1598–1621) on October 19, 1613, makes explicit mention of the people of Ricote. However, apparently only some local *moriscos* ever really left, and it seems that many even returned shortly after (Molina Molina 2014, p. 201; Westerveld and Ríos Martínez 2015).<sup>5</sup> In 1634, Jerónimo Medinilla of the Santiago Order visited the Ricote region and reported that some of its villages were still full of *moriscos*, who even entertained relations with others living in the Kingdom of Valencia. Felipe IV (r. 1621–1665), however, showed no interest in pursuing further expulsion measures (Molina Molina 2014, p. 202; Tueller 2014, p. 214). The valley's exceptional status might have even found a rather unexpected echo in Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quijote* (1605 and 1615), who included a character named Ricote that might have been intended as a straightforward reference to the region, which, for so many centuries, had been an important—and presumably last—repository of Islamic culture in the Iberian Peninsula (Westerveld and Ríos Martínez 2015).

**Acknowledgments** I am obliged to Alicia Hernández Robles (Universidad de Murcia) for providing me with helpful additional information on the history of Murcia and its urban architecture in the Middle Ages, as well as to Francine Giese (University of Zurich) for her invaluable advice concerning theories of cultural exchange and social networks.

<sup>5</sup> Ángel Luis Molina Molina estimates that of the approx. 10,000 *moriscos* of Murcia affected by the expulsion, only about 2500 really left Spain for good.

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## Islamic Legacy in Medieval Iberian Societies: Building Rules

*Sandra M. G. Pinto*

This chapter seeks to show how the building regulations of Christian medieval societies of the Iberian Peninsula were influenced by building principles and rules bequeathed by the Muslims who had resided and ruled in that same space a short time previously. This influence is therefore one of the many marks of the Islamic cultural legacy left in the area of the Iberian Peninsula. The text is developed by using and intersecting the written sources which have survived to the present day. However, in order to understand the influences and the legacy in question, it is necessary first of all to consider the origin of Islamic building rules, which were closely linked to a specific official named *mulhtasib*. In fact, following the history of this official allows us to travel back to classical antiquity and to wander along the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. However, the qualifier that best describes such official is perhaps that of being complex. Complex, due to the multiple aspects through which he can be analysed, both in time or in space, or at the level of his duties and procedures. Still, the focus in this study is that of the Iberian area and one of his functions, that is, his control

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M. Marcos Cobaleda (ed.), *Artistic and Cultural Dialogues in the  
Late Medieval Mediterranean*, Mediterranean Perspectives,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53366-3\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53366-3_8)

over building activity, as this is the aspect which has received the least attention from historiography. Therefore, this study starts by analysing the formation and mission of the official and the Islamic rules, followed by verification of the transformation and transmission which took place in relation to Christian officials and rules. Finally, it will be shown, albeit briefly, how such an Islamic legacy extended for much longer and expanded to non-European territories, thus allowing it to be considered a truly transtemporal and transcultural phenomenon.

## 8.1 FORMATION AND MISSION

The history of the Islamic official *muhtasib* and its institution, called *Ḥisba*, has received frequent attention from scholars from various disciplines and backgrounds, despite their different thematic goals, from at least the mid-nineteenth century (e.g. Behrnauer 1861; Amedroz 1916; Tyan 1960 [1938], p. 616–60; Gaudefroy-Demombynes 1938, 1947; Marçais 1954, p. 258–61; Schacht 1964; Cahen and Talbi 1986 [1967]; Chalmeta Gendrón 1970; Foster 1970; Glick 1972; Floor 1985; Crone 1987, p. 107–08; Buckley 1992; Shatzmiller 1994, p. 71–76; Essid 1995, p. 109–50; Vercellin 1998; Cook 2001; Berkey 2004; Ghabin 2008, 2009, 2011; Berkey 2004; Stilt 2011, p. 38–47; Stilt and Saraçoğlu 2018).

However, there is no historiographic consensus about the origin of the terms and the actual origin of the post. First of all, because the words *ḥisba* and *muhtasib*, which come from the same consonant root *ḥ-s-b*, are implicit in the idea of calculation or sufficiency (Cahen and Talbi 1986, p. 486; Ghabin 2009, p. 13), although its current meaning is different, and it is not evident how it was acquired. Indeed,

*Ḥisba* is typically defined as encompassing both the duty of Muslim individuals to command right and forbid wrong and the jurisdiction of the person who is officially appointed to carry out that activity, the *muhtasib*. (Stilt 2011, p. 41)

On the other hand, neither of the terms is inscribed in the holy book of Islam (Cahen and Talbi 1986, p. 485), although they are associated with the Qur'ānic injunction *al-amr bi-l-ma'rūf wa-l-nahy 'an al-munkar* [commanding right and forbidding wrong], which, moreover, should be followed by all Muslims (Cook 2001, p. 13).



If the oldest written sources mentioning the terms *muḥtasib* and *ḥisba* date from the first Umayyad caliph, Mu'āwiya (ruled 661–680) (Ghabin 2011, p. 41–44), *Ḥisba*, as an eminently religious institution, seemed to start only in the next caliphate, the Abbasid, more precisely with the caliph al-Manṣūr (ruled 754–775) (Buckley 1992, p. 66; Ghabin 2011, p. 44–46). However, for some researchers, it was during the governance of the caliph al-Ma'mūn (ruled 813–833) that the *muḥtasib* acquired secular functions, related to aspects of administration, economy and the police. Such a condition was due to the Islamization of governmental institutions by the Abbasids as a means of centralizing power (Cahen and Talbi 1986 [1967], p. 487; Glick 1972, p. 65; Buckley 1992, p. 83–97).

In this way, the *muḥtasib* eventually replaced another official, active in the markets and urban life of the main cities—such as Medina and Mecca—since the earliest times of Islam, called *ʿāmil al-sūq*, *wālī al-sūq* or *ṣāhib al-sūq*. As regards this latter position, it is known that it only involved secular functions, precisely those that derive from its name, that is, inspector or head (*ṣāhib*) of the market (*sūq*), thus acting to control the products put on sale, measuring instruments and inspecting actual trade, arbitrating disputes between sellers and buyers, as well as with a secondary responsibility of supervising urban roads (Cahen and Talbi 1986 [1967], p. 487; Buckley 1992, p. 60–62).

The genesis of *ṣāhib al-sūq* is also not consensual, with there being several lines of thought. One considers this officer as the Islamic version of a Hellenic official. In fact, in ancient Greece, it was incumbent on the *agoranomos* to inspect the markets, stores and products traded, as well as check the conformity of weights and measures within the *agora*. Associated with this official, because he assisted him, although he operated outside the *agora*, there was another, also municipal, official, the *astinomos*, whose main function was to supervise construction by private individuals as well as urban cleaning, street and public building maintenance, preventing any usurpations or deteriorations. However, at the end of the classical period, some of the functions of the latter were transferred to the former (Foster 1970, p. 129; Glick 1972, p. 61–62; Essid 1995, p. 118–20). As can be seen, the similarities between the Greek *agoranomos* officials and the

Islamic *ṣāhib al-sūq* and *muḥtasib* are enormous in terms of their powers and competences, hence the parallel made (Amedroz 1916, p. 288; Gaudefroy-Demombynes 1947; Schacht 1964, p. 51–52; Chalmeta Gendrón 1970, p. 146; Cahen and Talbi 1986 [1967], p. 487; Floor 1985, p. 53–59).

The main criticism of this hypothesis arises from the fact that the functions of the *agoranomos* were also carried out by other officers with different designations, such as *logistēs*, *eparch*, *eirenarch*, and *episcopos* or, for the Romans, *censor* and *aedile* throughout a large part of the territory of the Byzantine Empire and from the end of the third century, although in certain regions the first designation was maintained (Foster 1970, p. 133–38; Vercellin 1998, p. 79–87). Such inference has led to the suggestion that similar administrative functions may have arisen according to the needs of each society, without this necessarily having involved direct continuity or transposition between officials, or even in terms of terminology (Foster 1970, p. 144; Buckley 1992, p. 63–65).

However, another hypothesis asserts that the relationship between the *agoranomos* and the *ṣāhib al-sūq* did not arise directly, but rather emerged through the Semitic communities of Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia, since the translation of the Greek term *agoranomesanta* (the one who was *agoranomos*) to Aramaic is read as *wa-hū rab shūq* (or *rabb shuqq*), with the actual Arabic word *sūq* being borrowed from Aramaic. As we can see, this expression is very similar to the Arabic term, thus linking, in this case, the Muslims much more to the Jews than to the Greeks (Glick 1972, p. 61–64; Sperber 1977, p. 231; Crone 1987, p. 108; Ghabin 2008, p. 73–76; 2011, p. 24–27).

However, in addition to the previous discussion, in the Iberian Peninsula the importance of the *ṣāhib al-sūq* is not exhausted through being the predecessor of the *muḥtasib*. And this was due to the Umayyads. It was this dynasty that, since 711, had conquered the territory of the Iberian Peninsula from the Visigothic kingdom of Hispania, bringing with it Islamic culture. *Ṣāhib al-sūq* thus appeared in al-Andalus in the middle of the eighth century, although the position remained here longer than in the Eastern Islamic territories. The reason lay in the seizure of power by the Abbasids in Damascus in 750, and the consequent fall of the Umayyad dynasty, the sole survivor of which would take refuge in al-Andalus. This territory became independent, first politically, by the establishment of an emirate, and then religiously, with the establishing of a caliphate. Separated, the Iberian Peninsula remained closed to cultural and institutional

innovations, imposed by the Abbasids, which included the *muḥtasib*, keeping the *ḥisba* only as a practical or secular institution for administration and policy. Only later, after the disintegration of the Umayyad caliphate, during the rule of the ṭāʾifa kings (*mulūk al-ṭawāʾif*), in the eleventh century, did al-Andalus receive new influences, with the *ṣāhib al-sūq* gradually being replaced by the *muḥtasib* (Chalmeta Gendrón 1970, p. 147; Glick 1972, p. 65–68; Buckley 1992, p. 62–63; Ghabin 2008, p. 77–96).

As in the important cities of the Eastern territories, in Cordoba, Seville or Granada, the *muḥtasib* was also assisted by other officials who helped him in the actual and effective exercise of vast powers. In addition to the direct helpers, there were two others who were mainly involved in the control of craftsmen and in the production and sale of their products. They were called *amīn* (with plural *umanā*) and *ʿarīf* (with plural *ʿurafāʾ*). The first term means trustworthy and refers to a member of the group of craftsmen that acted as head, trustee or representative of the craft itself. The second term means the one who knows, and also refers to a member of the group of craftsmen but, in this case, a specialist or master of the craft itself who oversaw the quality of the products or services (Cahen 1986 [1960]; El-Ali and Cahen 1986 [1960]; Buckley 1992, p. 112–17; García Sanjuán 1997, p. 215–25). The builders also had their specialists, called *ʿurafāʾ al-bannaʾin* [master builders], as can be seen, for example, in the building of the Mosque of Cordoba (Ocaña Jimenez 1986, p. 57–59). However, it seems that in the Islamic West the title of *ʿarīf* came to be connected mainly to building craftsmen, that is, it

was applied to the *muhandis* (construction engineer) who planned the building and supervised its performance and also the builder himself, the *bannaʾ*. (Ghabin 2008, p. 179)

In al-Andalus, the *ṣāhib al-sūq* and later the *muḥtasib* also performed *agoronomic* and *astinomic* functions (Glick 1972, p. 68–70). The latter included the control of building activity. The *ḥisba* manuals of al-Andalus are unequivocal in regard to this attribution, although, in fact, the building rules included are not very numerous, a result of the range of subjects included in this type of source.

For example, in the text called *Aḥkam al-sūq* [Rules of the Market], written in the ninth century by Abū Zakariyyā Yahyā ibn ʿUmar ibn Yūsuf ibn ʿĀmir al-Kinānī, of Cordoba, there is a rule prohibiting the changing

or opening of new doors in houses situated in narrow dead-end streets, with such actions only being permitted in streets containing exit from both sides (García Gómez 1957, p. 292). In the same city, but the first half of the tenth century, the *Risāla fī adab al-Ḥisba wa-l-muḥtasib* [Treatise on the Canons of the *Ḥisba* and of the *Muḥtasib*], of Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd-Allāh ibn ‘Abd-al-Ra’ūf, contains a chapter dedicated to surveillance of the streets where attention is drawn to the need for them to be unobstructed and neat in order not to inconvenience the passers-by (Arié 1960, p. 360–63). In the *Kitāb fī adab al-Ḥisba* [Book on the Canons of the *Ḥisba*], by Abū ‘Abd-Allāh Muḥammad ibn ‘Abī Muḥammad al-Saqāṭī, from Malaga, written in the first half of the thirteenth century, one can discover only the reference to the prohibition of the *mu’addhin* [the person who makes the call to prayer], when he was in the minaret, of robbing the privacy of the women and the houses of others (Chalmeta Gendró 1967–68, 32(2), p. 373). From the end of the same century, there is also the *Risāla fī al-Ḥisba* [Treatise on the *Ḥisba*], written by a Maghrebi who settled in al-Andalus, called ‘Umar ibn ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Abbās al-Jarsīfī. Al-Jarsīfī claimed that the *muḥtasib*’s competence was to inspect the streets and markets of Muslims, watching over anything that might contaminate them or make circulation difficult or gloomy, and therefore restricting the construction of outlying elements or sheds. He also monitored the construction of latrines, sewers and rubbish tips. Moreover, he prevented the *dhimma* [non-Muslims] from building their dwellings higher than the houses of the Muslims (Wickens 1956, p. 181; Arié 1960, p. 368).

Within this type of manual, the *Risāla fī al-ḡada’ wa-l-Ḥisba* [Treatise on the Justice and on the *Ḥisba*], produced by Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Abdūn, from Seville, at the end of the eleventh century, stands out, due to its long section on buildings and the arrangement of streets, sewers and rubbish tips. According to Ibn ‘Abdūn, houses were understood as the refuge of souls, spirits and bodies, as well as their goods, and were therefore to be protected and guarded. Such attention soon passed to the building phase, which included the examination of the materials used. Therefore, Ibn ‘Abdūn left some building rules concerning the width of the walls, the distance of the master beams, the thickness of the stairs and the quality of the plaster. Rules that extended to the manufacture of tiles, bricks, adobe and other ceramic pieces, for which there were models, in hardwood, held by the *muḥtasib* or hung on the wall of the Great Mosque. Ibn ‘Abdūn also left indications for street cleaning and sewer construction, the location of rubbish tips, potteries, wood and coal sellers, but also

the location of the vendors who were able to be near the Great Mosque (Lévi-Provençal and García Gómez 1948, p. 112–23, 134–35).

Nonetheless, there is still another type of Islamic source containing building rules. These are the so-called *fiqh al-bunyan* [building jurisprudence] books, because they form a compilation of a series of legal opinions and judgements of eminent jurists, usually presented in the form of a question followed by a response (Van Staëvel 2006, p. 65–68). That is, they are

records from a perspective of building-related conflicts – contestations and/or transgressions – plus their solutions that occurred in, and referred to, the medina environment’s semi-private and public spaces. (O’Meara 2009, p. 14)

One of these books—indeed the oldest of its kind known—was written in the tenth century by a jurist from Tudela, who was educated in Cordoba and Kairouan, named ‘Īsā ibn Mūsā ibn Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf ibn Mūsā ibn Khaṣīb al-Tuḥīlī, better known as Ibn al-Imām. Its title is *Kitāb al-qaḍā’ wa-nafy al-ḍarar ‘an al-afniya wa-l-turuq wa-l-judur wa-l-mabānī wa-l-ṣahāt wa-l-shajar wa-l-jāmi* [Book of Judgement and Condemnation of the Damages affecting the Free Spaces Around the Buildings, the Streets, the Walls, the Buildings, the Squares, the Trees and the Great Mosque] (Barbier 1900–1901).

Ibn al-Imām brought together a series of legal deliberations and legal opinions intended to serve as a reference or rule, for the same or similar problems arising in the neighbourhood in relations between owners or co-owners, both collateral and overlapping. Problems which arose were: invasions of property and privacy; the use of walls, windows and doors; rainwater or wastewater passages and drainage; material damage or disturbances caused by productive activities, animals or trees; occupation or usurpation of public roads. These building rules, more private than public in nature, were based essentially on the principle of free improvement of one’s own property, which was only limited by the command not to cause injury or damage, beneficial or not, to oneself or another, whether this was a close resident or a passer-by, in order to maintain good understanding among neighbours (Brunschvig 1948, p. 127–30; Van Staëvel 2001, p. 228–33; Hakim 2014, p. 57–60, 191–93). A precept, which ultimately had been sanctioned by a statement from the Prophet himself: *lā ḍarar wa-lā ḍirār* [no harm shall be inflicted or reciprocated] (Zakariyah 2015, p. 158).

## 8.2 TRANSFORMATION AND TRANSMISSION

At the same time that the *muḥtasib* became current in al-Andalus, the Christian *Reconquista* of the territory was already accelerating. In fact, starting from Asturias, at the northern top of the Iberian Peninsula, Christianity expanded territorially towards the Islamic south, giving rise to five kingdoms: León, Navarra, Castile, Aragon-Catalonia and Portugal. However, the new rulers did not completely wipe out the former Islamic governance structures, but rather incorporated them and Christianized them. This is visible in a number of areas (military, judicial, fiscal and administrative) marked by the presence of a number of officials whose designations preserved almost unchanged terms originating from the Arabic language.

This happened to the officials under consideration in this study, with *ṣāhib al-sūq* becoming *zabazoque*. The earliest mention that is known of this Christian official dates back to 1020, in the *fuero* [borough charter in Castilian] of León—in the form of *zavazoures*, in the Latin version, or *çabaçoques* in the Castilian version—who appeared to regulate the sale of meat (Muñoz y Romero 1847, p. 69, 84). However, it is probable that this office was taken by Mozarabic immigrants [Christians living under Islamic governance] in the kingdom of León, because at that time, there is no reference in written sources that shows the presence of a specific official to inspect the markets, either in this kingdom or in Castile, as, indeed, existed in the Frankish monarchy with the *judex fori* [market judge], or in the kingdom of Navarre with the *senior mercati* [master of the market] (Valdeavellano 1931, p. 319–26; Chalmeta Gendrón 1970, p. 145–47; Glick 1972, p. 71).

However, shortly thereafter, the *zabazoque* also gave way to the Christian version of the *muḥtasib*. The new Christian officials then took on Latinized and Hispanized designations, the slight variants of which stemmed from the linguistic evolution of the different kingdoms. One of the oldest known references of this official can be found in a will in Latin, written in 1094 in the city of Coimbra, at the time belonging to the Portucalense County. It mentions a vineyard owned by an *almohtaceph* named Iohannis [John] (Ventura and Veloso 1978, p. 3–4; Pinto 2018, p. 41). However, most of the documentary records using this term appeared only in the twelfth century, mentioning an *almotaçaf* in the *fur* [borough charter in Aragonese] from Daroca, of 1142, from the kingdom of Aragon (Agudo Romero 1992, p. 45), and an *almutazeb* in the *posturas*

[local customary laws] of Coimbra, of 1145, from the kingdom of Portugal (Herculano 1856–1858, I, p. 743–44).

In Portugal, this was fixed at *almotacé*, as reflected in the *foral* [borough charter in Portuguese] of Tomar of 1174 and in the *foral* of Santarém of 1179, although the *forais* of Coimbra and Lisbon, also of 1179, maintained the form *almotaze* (Herculano 1856–1858, I, p. 400, 407, 412, 416). From these *forais* the official was placed in many other Portuguese settlements south of the Mondego River, and the official *almotacé* was found in more than twenty *forais* of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Reis 2002, p. 143–51, 163–74; Pinto 2018, p. 42, 54). In fact, in the areas where the Islamic presence was smaller, such as north of the Douro River, it seems that the generalization of use of this official took place in the first half of the thirteenth century, as evidenced by a royal law, issued in 1253, specifically for settlements in the north of Portugal, despite its application throughout the territory (Herculano 1856–1858, I, p. 191–96; Pinheiro and Rita 1988).

From the aforementioned *fur* of Daroca resulted the settlement charter for Teruel of 1176, which registers the position of *almutaçaph* (Castañe 1989, p. 87) which, in turn, gave rise to many other charters for Aragonese and also Castilian settlements. The first diploma which registered the position in the Kingdom of Castile is probably the *fuero* of Cuenca, of 1189–1191, and which, through its various Latin and Romance versions, allows to understand the alteration of the Aragonese pronunciation of *almutazaph* or *almutaçaf* to the Castilian form *almotaçan* or *almotaçén* (Ureña y Smenjaud 1935, p. 422–23). This *fuero* served as a model for many charters for other Castilian settlements, not only of the southern territory, such as Iznatoraf or Baeza, but also for the north, such as Zorita de los Canes and Sepúlveda, with the *almotaçén* present in their thirteenth- or early-fourteenth-century *fueros* (Ureña y Smenjaud 1935, p. 423; Roudil 1962, p. 134–35; Ureña y Smenjaud 1911, p. 185–86; Sáez 1953, p. 122). In addition, although this official does not appear in the *fueros* of Toledo (García-Gallo de Diego 1975), other documentary records, mainly Mozarabic, prove their existence in this city since the late twelfth century (González Palencia 1926–1930, I, p. 111–12; Chalmeta Gendrón 1970, p. 163–64).

With the conquest of Valencia in 1238, the *officium almudaçafie* was formalized shortly afterwards, also appearing as registered in the *furs* of Valencia, of 1261, with the form *almudazañus* in the Latin version and *almudaçaf* in the Romance version (Dualde Serrano 1967, p. 275; Mey

1547–1548, p. 239r). This official served a model for the establishment of the office in several towns of the Crown of Aragon, including in the county of Barcelona, in the Balearic Islands, in Lleida and Saragossa, but with the term ending up losing the Arab article *al-*, to be known only as *mustaçaçaf*. The transmission took place sometimes by royal initiative, as happened in Castelló de la Plana in 1284, Mallorca in 1309, Ibiza in 1342 and Vich in 1366, and other times, at the express request of the municipalities, as happened with Barcelona, which received this in 1339, from where it spread to Girona in 1351 and Igualada in 1381 (Sevillano Colom 1953; García 1955; Vernia 1988; Ferrer Abárzuza 2002; Chalmeta Gendrón 2008; Kierdorf 2019).

Also in the cities of Cordoba, Carmona, Seville and Murcia, conquered for the Crown of Castile—which now encompassed the kingdoms of Castile and León—respectively in 1236, 1247, 1248 and 1266, the *almo-tacén* was formally registered in their *fueros*, during the reorganization of these municipalities in the thirteenth century (Mellado Rodríguez 2000, p. 198–99; Manuel Rodríguez 1800, p. 540; González Arce 1989, p. 103–04; Torres Fontes 1983, p. 79–80). Moreover, in Seville, the assistants of the *muḥtasib* were also Christianized. The *ordenanzas* [local customary law] of Seville, possibly dating from 1248 and transmitted to Murcia in 1289, contain and explain the office of *alamine*—the Castilian version of the Islamic *amīn*—also called the *alcalde* [judge, from the Arabic word *qāḍī*] *de los menesteres* [of the craftsmen], as well as the office of *alarife*—the Castilian version of the Islamic *‘arīf*—, similarly defined as the *alcalde de las lauores* (judge of building works). The *almo-taçenes* only carried out functions controlling economic activities, especially in checking the weights and measures (González Arce 1989, p. 115, 117, 124–25).

In short, in some cities and towns of the Christian kingdoms of Portugal, Castile and Aragon, especially those that had a strong Muslim presence, the new Christian governments maintained the office of *muḥtasib*, hispanicizing it. In fact, this official

proved such an adaptable office that it served the needs of all who sought to regulate town life, whether kings, barons, or town councilmen. (Glick 1972, p. 71)

In other settlements of those kingdoms, reception of the office was made taking as a model the new Christian officials who had in the meantime been instituted. In this way, *almo-tacés*, *almo-tacéns* and *mustaçaçafs*



spread throughout almost all the Iberian territory, even in areas of the peninsula that had had little or almost no Islamic rule. And these officials kept, in addition to their designation, functions very similar to that of the Islamic homonym. The Castilian *alamines* and *alarifes* also followed in the footsteps of their predecessors, although they were not so widespread.

Evidence for the control of building activity by the *almotacés*, *almotacéns* and *mustaçafs* is also to be found in sources from various Iberian cities and towns. In the kingdom of Portugal, this is found in the customary law documents of the municipalities where the centre of the official's action was based. If in the *posturas* of Coimbra of 1145, there only appears that the *almotacé* provided the mould for the manufacture of tiles (Herculano 1856–1858, I, p. 744), better data is available in the *costumes* [customs] of Évora transmitted to Terena in 1280, in the *costumes* of Santarém transmitted to Borba of c. 1331–47, in the *costumes* of Beja of c. 1254–1335, in the *costumes* of Torres Novas of c. 1275–1325, in the *costumes* of Porto known through a royal inquiry of 1339, and in the *posturas* of Lisbon of the fourteenth century (Herculano 1856–1858, II, p. 85, 34, 70, 92; Bastos and Caldas 1891, p. 41; Velozo and Machado 1971, p. 45). Through these it is possible to understand that the *almotacé* was called to resolve disputes between neighbours that occurred in homes and buildings, *azinhagas* [narrow private streets, from the Arabic word *zanqā*] and streets, or because of the passage of individuals or water. Such disputes could arise as a result of certain specific elements or structures, such as walls, façades, crevices, windows, wooden beams, overhanging elements over the street, balconies and rainwater drainage pipes.

Only one medieval Portuguese document containing technical specifications is known or has been preserved until the present day. It is the *Forall da muy nobre e sempre leall çidade de Lixboa que mandou fazer. Joham estevez correa escudeiro almotaçee moor da çidade* [Legal Rules of the Very Noble and Always Loyal City of Lisbon, Made by João Esteves Correia, Squire and Senior *Almotacé* of the City], of 1444. The original document is lost, but its contents are known through a copy made in the second half of the fifteenth century included in the so-called *Livro das Posturas Antigas* [Book of Old Local Customary Laws] (Rodrigues 1974, p. 98–103), although its content is essentially a compilation of older rules, present in other documents of the fourteenth century (Pinto 2016). This *Forall* comprises a total of 48 items, of which twenty-two items relate to the field of construction; fifteen items define the functions of the *almotacé* and establish procedures for action, periods and penalties; ten items relate

to the market, establishing rates, weights and measures and selling procedures; and only one item refers to the paving of streets and the cleaning of public fountains. The items regarding building regulated the height of buildings, the opening of doors and windows, in various positions (over neighbouring yards or roofs, in alleys or *azinbagas*, in boundaries or vertically to other existing openings), the construction of overhanging elements and balconies over public streets, the use and sharing of jointly owned dividing walls, buildings built on to city walls, and the drainage and channelling of rainwater on roofs. The itemized proscriptions and prescriptions sought to avoid the looking into the property of others, thus ensuring privacy; the shutting off the natural light from windows or obstructing the entrance of neighbours, guarding salubrity and access to the buildings; or avoiding that which would cause damage to the buildings of others, protecting against any abuses or usurpations.

For the kingdom of Castile, the duties of the *almotacén* regarding building activity are also to be found in the legal compilations of the municipalities. In the *fueros* of Cuenca, from 1189 to 1191 in public streets this official controlled the construction of benches attached to the walls of the houses and visible or malodorous latrines (Ureña y Smenjaud 1935, p. 222–23, 366–67). The *Libro de ordenamientos municipales* [Book of Municipal Ordinances] of Murcia, compiled between 1309 and 1355, contains a specific section dedicated to the *almotacén*, comprising several items clearly related to construction (Torres Fontes 1983, p. 90–92, 121–24). Through these it can be understood that the *almotacén* inspected the works carried out by private individuals, as well as monitoring common infrastructures, such as sewers, and ordered the cleaning of the streets or the ditches around the urban wall. He established deadlines for the termination of works and ordered the demolition of walls that were dangerous to passers-by. He could demand the moving back of the façades of the houses that were to be constructed anew or which were reconstructed, invoking a royal disposition, at the same time as allowing the occupation of the airspace of the streets for the building of overhanging elements. Where it was customary, he could require that all the inhabitants, in their due parts, help and contribute to the payment of structures covering sunlight. He also managed possible conflicts between neighbours over jointly owned dividing walls, the enclosure of openings, or other things that were not defined in this regulation, having the power, with other judges, to resolve disputes on a case-by-case basis. He was also responsible for the good quality and price of the building materials.

Given the passage of the control of building activity from the *almotacén* to the *alarife* in Seville, in this city the building rules were gathered in the *Libro del Peso de los Alarifes y Balanza de Menestrales* [Book of the Weight of the Alarifes and Balance of the Craftsmen], an undated document but historiographically attributed to the third quarter of the thirteenth century (Gómez López 1991, p. 41; Cómez Ramos 2010, p. 269). The original has been lost but was transcribed in the recompilation of the laws of the city which was undertaken at the behest of the Catholic Kings and printed in the first half of the sixteenth century (*Recopilacion de los Ordenamientos* 1527, p. 141–46v). This book contains forty-one items, called chapters, of which: twenty-two items concern urban construction; twelve items deal with issues in rural areas; five items lay down procedures for resolving disputes arising from the transfer of real estate or related to defects in structures; one item, on urban cleaning (required that all the neighbours in each neighbourhood should establish or re-establish channels in the streets to drain water); and another item describes how the *alarifes* were selected. From this source it can be seen that the *alarifes* had a double function, as they not only supervised works and managed conflicts but they were also, indeed, building specialists. They were required to have knowledge of geometry and to know how to do civil equipment, such as cranes, or military devices, used in the service of the kings. The *alarife* was in charge of: control of royal works (urban wall, houses, inns) and the planning and inspection of public spaces (which also were property of the king); the inspection of facilities for common and private use (such as sewers, mills, dams, baths, ovens, pigeon houses); decision over ownership of properties (inheritances, possessions, sales, purchases and leases); and control over what individuals might or might not do in their buildings. Regarding building rules, of note are those that limited the height of the buildings; those that defined overhangs over the street or the construction of houses that crossed it; those which forbade the uncovering of the houses of others through the windows or doors of others; those relating to rainwater and the possession and management of jointly owned dividing walls; and those that limited the construction of baths, ovens, pigeon houses, pipes, cellars, wells, because of associated damages to neighbouring structures, such as smoke, noise, rotting or collapse.

For the kingdom of Aragon, the documentary sources that prove the *mustaçaf* being assigned control over building activity are different, a consequence of the aforementioned process of transmission of the official from Valencia. The office is then described either in royal privileges, as in

the case of Vich, or in intermunicipal consultations, as was the case between Valencia and Barcelona in 1371. Thus, the items and built structures referred to in the first document—such as: doors, windows, crevices, stilicide (dripping of rooftops), walls, overhangs/balconies, sales boards, sales benches, pits, sewers, tiles, porches, terraces, roads, streets, aqueducts, pipes, property borders, wells, easement of waters, obstacles, entrances and exits, privileged land and possessions (García 1956, p. 305)—such as the clear reference to works and servitudes, in the buildings, in the streets and in the squares, within the city or in the surrounding space, in the second document (Chalmeta Gendrón 2008, p. 210), attest to the role of the *mustaçaf* in the area of construction. There are also the so-called *Llibres del Mustaçaf* [Books of *Mustaçaf*], especially from the end of the thirteenth century, which contain royal privileges and municipal deliberations, but also rulings and notes of the official himself, which sometimes include building rules (Sevillano Colom 1953, p. 537; García 1955; Glick 1972, p. 73; Ferrer Abárzuza 2002, p. 35–48; Chalmeta Gendrón 2008, p. 204–05). As an example, we can see the rules that appear in the book of the *mustaçaf* of Lucena of the fifteenth century (Guinot Rodríguez 2006, p. 118–26).

However, like the official, some building rules also used by the *mustaçafs* were based on rules provided in the *furs* of Valencia, of 1261. The original of this document, in Latin, as well as the first version in Romance, have also disappeared, with a known Latin copy from the end of the thirteenth century and a copy in Romance from the fourteenth century. In the middle of the sixteenth century, the notary Juan Bautista Pastor systematized the *furs* into books and entries (Peset Reig 1989, p. 367–68). The field of construction appears, therefore, in the third book, the sixteenth entry, under the title *De servitut daygua e daltres coses* [On the Servitudes of Waters and Other Things] (Mey 1547–1548, p. 88v-91r). With a total of thirty-eight items, this entry comprises twenty-one items on building construction; sixteen items are related to rural spaces, because they deal with easements of waters or passage between agricultural fields; and one item refers to urban salubrity, since it refers to the obligation to remake run-down public streets. In addition to a few rules on the height of buildings or window coverings, the vast majority of items concerning building relate to jointly owned or common dividing walls and to easements of the passage of water (rainfall, waste or surface water), as well as to the passage of individuals. The principles set forth in the rules sought to ensure privacy, luminosity, salubrity, conservation and access to existing homes and

neighbouring structures. In addition to the aforementioned items, there were another three, related to the protection of public structures, which appear in the first book, the final part of the second entry, dedicated to the subjects *De les pastures y del vedat* [On Pastures and on Boundaries] (Mey 1547–1548, p. 8v).

Thus, comparing the aforementioned building regulations from Iberian Christian sources with the building rules from Islamic sources, it is possible to recognize several similarities. This analysis allows us to understand the building rules and principles which were bequeathed by Muslims and adapted to new political and religious contexts.

First of all, there is a great similarity in the legal principles used, which sought to protect and ensure good conviviality between neighbours regarding property, privacy, luminosity, salubrity and accessibility. If in Islamic law such principles were derived from the aforementioned statement of the Prophet, in Iberian Christian rights justification sometimes formed part of the rules themselves. Let us see some examples. It was forbidden to usurp another's property, as we can read in a Lisbon rule: *nenhũu nom pode poer madeira em na parede em que nom ha quinhom* [no one can put wooden beams in a wall of which they do not have a part] (Rodrigues 1974, p. 105). It was forbidden to peep in on someone else's house, as can be read from a Sevillian rule: *la descubricion de una casa a outra parece mal e no es biẽ descubrir ome casa agena* [peeping from one house to another looks bad and it is not good for a man to peep at another's home] (*Recopilacion de los Ordenamientos* 1527, p. 144v). It was forbidden to remove the light from the openings of other individuals, as can be read in a Lisbon rule: *quem quer podesse alçar pello sseu quanto quiser que nam tolha lume ao outro sseu vizinho* [whoever wants to can increase his building as long as he does not take the light from his neighbour] (Rodrigues 1974, p. 105). It was forbidden to do damage to the buildings of others, as can be read in a Valencian rule: *si nẽgun dan, ni nengun mal lin venie per raho daqueles cases* [without any damage, nor any harm which comes because of those houses] (Mey 1547–1548, p. 89). It was forbidden to do harm to public movement or to passers-by, as can be read in a Lisbon rule: *nam pode nenhũu verter agoa... que nam faça noJo nem mall a sseu vezinho ou aos que pasarem pella rrua* [no nobody can pour water... which causes damage, or harm their neighbour or those passing by on the street] (Rodrigues 1974, p. 110).

However, similarities are also found in building rules, such as those relating to the use of common items, such as walls or buildings. According

to Ibn al-Imām, the Prophet himself obliged all individuals to let their neighbours place beams on their walls, making them joint and common, without restrictions concerning payment or authorization. However, being common to two neighbours, jurists agreed that both had to contribute to their repair. However, it was enough for a neighbour to want to divide the common thing for such splitting to happen, if this thing were capable of being divided, like a building, otherwise—as with wells—one of the neighbours had to sell their part to the other (Barbier 1900–1901, 16, p. 11–21). In this respect, the rules of Valencia, Seville and Lisbon established that an individual could only use the wall of the neighbouring building if he had possession or servitude; however, there was the possibility of arranging with the neighbour to purchase the respective half of that wall which would become joint and common (Mey 1547–1548, p. 88v–89v; *Recopilacion de los Ordenamientos* 1527, p. 144; Rodrigues 1974, p. 105). In the division of a common house, both owners, in Seville and Lisbon, had to define the place to put a new wall and pay for its construction, otherwise the location and materials for the dividing wall would be decided, respectively, by the *alarife* and by the *almotacé*. The neighbour who had not contributed to the construction of the dividing wall could not use this new wall as a support for other structures (*Recopilacion de los Ordenamientos* 1527, p. 144v; Rodrigues 1974, p. 106–07). The latter precept also existed in Murcia (Torres Fontes 1983, p. 123). In Seville, there was still the practice of auctioning or selling indivisible things, with the product then being split between the parties (*Recopilacion de los Ordenamientos* 1527, p. 145).

Another example is the rules that guarded against the visual invasion of privacy and the familiar intimacy of neighbouring buildings, whether they were contiguous (side-by-side) or opposite (face-to-face). Firstly, the opening of new doors and windows was prohibited, usually in an elevated position, which would look in to the interior of their neighbours' buildings, courtyards, yards and pens. The *Kitāb al-qadā'* contains various opinions of jurists that stipulate the closure of illegal openings or the construction of physical barriers to cover them in order to protect the domestic privacy of neighbours (Barbier 1900–1901, 16, p. 55–6, 93–97). In Valencia, the rule stated that if someone built behind the neighbouring buildings, he could not open windows, make terraces or establish a viewpoint that would allow him to see that house and the other spaces (Mey 1547–1548, p. 88v). In Seville, openings for windows were allowed as

part of the contiguity of neighbouring buildings only for the entrance of light and air, but the size of these windows was limited to a size so small that a person's head could not pass through them (*Recopilacion de los Ordenamientos* 1527, p. 144v). And in Lisbon, opening windows and crevices was also forbidden, and terraces could not have small parapets, that would infringe the privacy of the house and yard of others. It was also added that, in the event of renovation of the walls, no one could change the number, size and location of existing openings (Rodrigues 1974, p. 105, 108).

Moreover, it was forbidden to open new doors and windows in front of the openings of facing neighbours buildings. In addition to the aforementioned rule of the Cordoban book of the ninth century (*Aḥkam al-ṣūq*), Ibn al-Imām tells of a jurist who stated that doors in alleys could not be built aligned with those of the opposite neighbour, nor against those of neighbours to the side, but in streets it was possible to construct any number of doors. He further argued that this was the actual opinion of Mālik ibn Anas—the founder of the predominant legal school in al-Andalus. Ibn al-Imām also explained that other jurists backed up the same opinion, although they had differences of opinion regarding the streets. For some, this could only be done when the streets were wide enough not to cause harm, and all doors aligned were to be banned where it was possible to reveal the interior of the opposing house. For others, two doors could not be placed opposite each other on any street, and the opening was to be misaligned by one to two *codos* [unit of measurement] (Barbier 1900–1901, 16, p. 97–100)—about half a metre to one metre. In addition, on the streets of Lisbon, it was forbidden to open doors and windows aligned with the facing doors and windows, and these openings had to be completely misaligned (Rodrigues 1974, p. 111). In the streets of Seville, the opening of doors and windows was less constrained, and the alignment of the openings being depended on the approval or not of the facing neighbour (*Recopilacion de los Ordenamientos* 1527, p. 145). However, in Valencia, it was permitted for doors and windows to be aligned between opposite buildings openings when there was a thoroughfare for movement in between (Mey 1547–1548, p. 88v). Yet, the inclusion of the phrase *A nengu dels vehins no es vedat bastir, o edificar* [no neighbour is not forbidden to construct or build] in the Valencian rule, by clearing negating a prohibition, seems to suppose the existence of a contrary practice that the jurists wanted to modify, perhaps to avoid the many conflicts this rule provoked, or because they felt that such use no longer made sense.

The same parallel between the building rules could also be stated regarding those that dealt with occupying part of the airspace of the street to construct balconies, overhangs and eaves. The *Kitāb al-qaḍā'* does not appear to discriminate as to whether airspace may be used by private individuals, with there being only opinions from various jurists, for whom such structures could not be prohibited, although they had to be placed high enough not to hinder the traffic of persons and goods (Barbier 1900–1901, 16, p. 46–47). In Seville, eaves could occupy a third of the width of the street, and a compartment was also allowed to cross the entire airspace of the street, provided that it was high enough to allow the passage of a knight with his arms (*Recopilacion de los Ordenamientos 1527*, p. 144–144v). In Murcia, the construction of overhangs could also take up a third of the width of the street, but only if they were high, since if they were low the proportion was smaller, namely only a fifth of the width of the street, with this still being dependent on the *almotacén's* opinion (Torres Fontes 1983, p. 123). In Lisbon, a third of the width of the street could be used for balconies, overhangs and eaves. The full occupation of the width of the street was only allowed provided that the houses on both sides of the street were owned by the same owner. In this city, it was also pointed out that no one acquired ownership of aerial structures on the streets because, by definition, the streets were owned by the municipality that had the power to have them demolished (Rodrigues 1974, p. 107, 112). However, in the *furs* of Valencia, the construction of overhangs over public spaces was forbidden, with only existing structures being tolerated, although if they were destroyed, they could no longer be rebuilt. The façade of the buildings had to be straight from the foundations to the eaves. But the eaves could also occupy a third of the width of the street (Mey 1547–1548, p. 8v, 89v).

The examples given show how some rules of building regulations of Valencia, Seville, Murcia and Lisbon undoubtedly manifested a strong Islamic influence. However, it should be emphasized that this influence did not stem from the simple transposition or translation of Islamic law into Christian law, since both show a structurally different form. If Islamic legal texts, for a single problem, compiled a series of opinions of jurists, and therefore deliberations with slight differences could arise, a consequence of the various possible interpretations, Christian building regulations appeared in the form of a command, either negative (prohibiting), or positive (obliging) or by compliance with conditions (allowing if), but without any doubts as to the desired result. Rather, the influence is verified



by the persistence of certain mental, cultural and social concerns (Molénat 2001, p. 198).

The differences found result from other legal influences brought or assimilated by the settlers of the *Reconquista*. Such is the case of the Frank Right, visible in the rules of Lisbon and Seville, for the time limit of a year and a day, or of Roman Law by means of the *ius commune* [common law], visible in the rules of Valencia, through its building servitudes (Pinto 2017, p. 844–45). In addition, the disparities discovered between the Christian rules can be seen as the result of the particular development of each community and region, reflecting also the potential for specificity and conflict that existed in the neighbourhood relations of each city.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the aforementioned medieval Christian rules themselves constituted a legacy for other settlements (Pinto 2017, p. 849–50). The rules of Seville were directly transmitted to Toledo at the end of the fourteenth century, appearing in the last chapter of its *Ordenanzas Antiguas* [Old Laws] (Izquierdo Benito 1986, p. 525–32; Morollón Rodríguez 2005, p. 429–39; Hakim 2014, p. 73–82, 199–201). These were also transmitted to Cordoba, in the transition of the fifteenth century to the sixteenth century, appearing in its *Ordenanzas Municipales* [Municipal Laws] under the title *Peso de los Alarifes e Balança de los Maestros e Oficiales* [Weight of the Alarifes and Balance of the Masters and Officials], though this set of regulations was expanded to include new rules (*Ordenanzas de alarifes* 1786, p. 3–69; Cómez Ramos 2010, p. 270; Padilla González 2009; Hakim 2014, p. 82–86, 202–29; González Jiménez 2016, p. 337–88). Then, in the modern period and up to the nineteenth century, the *alarifazgo*—the institution of *alarife*—taking Seville as a model and also the Sevillian rules, becoming an essential urban institution in Spanish cities and towns, including those in South America (Cómez Ramos 2006 [2001], p. 166–68).

The Lisbon rules were transformed, with few changes, into general law for the kingdom of Portugal, being included in the legal compilation of 1521 with the title *Dos Almotacees, e cousas que a seu Officio pertencem* [Of the *Almotacés*, and things that belong to his Office], remaining unchanged in the subsequent legal compilation of 1603 (Costa 1984, I, p. 339–56; *Ordenações e Leis* 1790, I, p. 295–305; Pinto 2016, p. 69–75). Because they are included in the general law of the kingdom, the building regulation of the *almotaçaria*—the institution of the *almotacé*—began to have greater territorial scope, and was to be applied to all Portuguese cities and towns not only in the territory of the Iberian Peninsula, but to all of the

Overseas Empire (with domains in the Atlantic islands, on the coasts of Africa, in Brazil, India and Southeast Asia). Its revocation occurred only in the middle of the nineteenth century, with the entry into force of the new Portuguese Civil Code, although some legal remnants of the rules of the *almotaçaria* remained in the 1916's civil law of the new Brazilian state (Pinto 2015, p. 397–98).

### 8.3 CLOSING REMARKS

The textual sources consulted in this study confirm the Islamic cultural legacy left in the urban life of Christian medieval Iberian societies; a legacy which, as always happens, was due both to the side influencing and the side being influenced. Specifically, this resulted from the maintenance and incorporation of a Muslim official. In fact, and borrowing the words of Thomas F. Glick (1979, p. 124):

More important than the culture he represented, the *muhtasib* reflected a higher stage of urbanization and economic organization and his utility to the expanding Christian urban economies served an immediate and useful integrative purpose.

In addition to his role as inspector of the markets and of weights and measures—a role historiography often recognizes—the importance of the *muhtasib* and the institution of the office in the Iberian Peninsula unequivocally manifested itself in the built environment through control of building activity.

It is true that the brevity of this chapter did not allow us to describe other parallels that can be made between the *muhtasib* and subsequent Christian officials, or only among the latter, in the administrative and practical management of the control of building activity. This is the case, among other things, with the number of people who were in that position, their form of selection, the qualities they had to possess, the oath required to be taken before assuming office, their time of service, their remuneration, the verbal nature of their decisions, the brevity of their action, possible resources, or their hierarchical position relative to the other agents of the legal system. In any event, dealing with just building rules has already shown itself sufficient to show how the Islamic cultural legacy permeated civilizations.

In short, as Fernand Braudel stated, in his masterful book *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen au temps de Philippe II*,

The mark of a living civilization is that it is capable of exporting itself, of spreading its culture to distant places. (Braudel 1995 [1949], p. 763)

one can then deduce that Muslim civilization, through the mark left on the Christian societies of the Iberian Peninsula, has remained incontestably alive, far beyond its initially determined territorial and temporal boundaries.

**Acknowledgments** This work is funded by national funds through the FCT—Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P., under the Norma Transitória—DL 57/2016/CP1453/CT0026. It also had the support of CHAM (NOVA FCSH—UAç), through the strategic project sponsored by FCT (UID/HIS/04666/2019).

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# From *ahbās* to *habices*: Continuity and Transformation of Pious Endowments after the Castilian Conquest of Nasrid Granada

*Ana María Carballeira Debasa*

## 9.1 INTRODUCTION

Within the context of the cultural legacy that pre-modern Western Islamic societies bequeathed to the Christian world, there exist certain elements particular to the former that were incorporated into early modern Spain. This was a historical period in which elements of both continuity and rupture were simultaneously present as two very different societies confronted each other, Islamic on the one hand and Christian on the other. It is in this environment that I will analyse the survival, with certain changes, of the Islamic pious endowments known in Spanish as *habices* (sing. *habiz*, from

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© The Author(s) 2021  
M. Marcos Cobaleda (ed.), *Artistic and Cultural Dialogues in the  
Late Medieval Mediterranean*, Mediterranean Perspectives,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53366-3\\_9](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53366-3_9)

Arabic *ḥubs*, pl. *ahbās*)<sup>1</sup> from the Andalusi period, following the absorption of the Nasrid kingdom of Granada<sup>2</sup> by the Crown of Castile in 1492.

This kind of Islamic foundation consisted of donations made for the immediate or long-term benefit of a pious cause by means of the ceding in perpetuity of the use of or usufruct rights to a particular property. This practice was widespread in not only al-Andalus (Carballeira Debasa 2002; Carballeira Debasa 2005; García Sanjuán 2002, García Sanjuán 2007), but also other societies of the Islamic world.<sup>3</sup> In the specific instance of the former, such pious legacies were earmarked for a variety of purposes. In some cases, an endowment (known as *ḥubs khayrī*) might serve the general public interest by supporting institutions or buildings that were clearly religious in nature such as mosques or cemeteries, providing charitable funding to aid the poor and ill, ransoming hostages or freeing slaves, or maintaining infrastructural elements of common use to the population such as fortresses, defensive walls, roads, bridges, springs, reservoirs or wells.<sup>4</sup> In other instances, however, an endowment (designated as *ḥubs ahli*) might be set up to cover the needs of the family of the benefactor as long as they were alive, at which time the assets would be allocated to a charitable purpose.<sup>5</sup> As a general rule, once a pious legacy was established,

<sup>1</sup>This is the Arabic term that was used in Western Islam. The word employed to describe the same concept in Eastern Islam is *waqf* (pl. *awqāf*).

<sup>2</sup>The Nasrid kingdom of Granada (1238–1492) was the last holdout of Islamic power in the Iberian Peninsula. It was made up of the modern Andalusian provinces of Granada, Almería and Málaga, as well as parts of the provinces of Jaén, Murcia and Cádiz.

<sup>3</sup>By way of example, Meier et al. (2009).

<sup>4</sup>Regarding the *ḥubs khayrī* in al-Andalus, see Carballeira Debasa (2002, p. 67–202), García Sanjuán (2002, p. 169–254) and García Sanjuán (2007, p. 184–292). By setting up a pious endowment, the founder not only gained merit in the eyes of God and thus hope of divine reward, but also acquired considerable social prestige and even political legitimacy. For more on the use of charity in al-Andalus as a legitimising strategy for political power, see Carballeira Debasa (2011, p. 85–130) and Carballeira Debasa (2017, p. 233–62).

<sup>5</sup>In these cases, setting up a *ḥubs ahli* offered an easy way to get around the Qurʾān-mandated break-up of inherited property, thus ensuring that it remained wholly in the hands of the family. At the same time, the endowment protected the family heritage against confiscation by rulers in moments of political turmoil. For more on *ḥubs ahli* in al-Andalus, see Carballeira Debasa (2002, p. 203–72), García Sanjuán (2002, p. 139–68) and García Sanjuán (2007, p. 142–83).

the owners could not designate the foundation for any other purpose besides that stipulated in the endowment deed. The implementation of a pious donation was overseen by designated executors, who also saw to it that these kind of goods remained not just in good condition, but also profitable through rental.<sup>6</sup>

With regard to Nasrid Granada, the pious endowments constituted a property system that affected more or less the entire kingdom. Besides the foundations set up in more peripheral regions, there is evidence of a large number linked to the capital of Granada and adjacent areas, in other words, the towns that surrounded the city in the districts of the Vega and Lecrín Valley, as well as a broad swathe of the Alpujarra district (Álvarez de Morales 2007, p. 10; Carballeira Debas and Álvarez de Morales 2013, p. 160).

In the present study, I will examine how this Islamic property system was assimilated into a new Christian society. I will analyse the process by which the pious legacies of Nasrid Granada were transferred to Castilian institutions following the Christian conquest, with special attention paid to the numerous donations which had been designated to benefit religious ends. Likewise, I will explore not only the new status which these endowments acquired within the Castilian legal framework, but also their internal functioning in the new historical context. Finally, I will put forward some hypotheses about their persistence over the following centuries and final destiny. It should be noted that this work is limited to providing a first approximation of the topic under study. This preliminary research seeks to lay the basis for the investigation of an issue that deserves a thorough analysis in the future.

## 9.2 THE TRANSFER OF ISLAMIC PIOUS ENDOWMENTS TO CHRISTIAN INSTITUTIONS

As mentioned, the Christian conquest of al-Andalus culminated in 1492 with the defeat of the Nasrid kingdom of Granada, the last bastion of Islam in the Iberian Peninsula. This event marked the beginning of what

<sup>6</sup>For further information on the management and administration of pious endowments in al-Andalus, see Carballeira Debas (2002, p. 283–96), García Sanjuán (2002, p. 255–87) and García Sanjuán (2007, p. 293–336).

is known as the “Mudéjar period”, which followed the signing of a treaty of surrender in November 1491 between Castilians and Nasrids. This capitulation agreement stipulated that the religion and customs of the Muslim population would be respected, as would be their institutions and administrative bodies, along with goods catalogued as pious endowments. In this way, the Mudéjars—Muslims living under Christian rule—were able to maintain the way of life to which they were accustomed.<sup>7</sup> However, within a few years the persistent maltreatment of the Muslim population by Christians coupled with growing fiscal pressures from the Crown created a profound malaise in the Mudéjar community, which sparked a general uprising in 1499–1500. After the revolt was suppressed in April 1501, new surrender terms set forth in the new capitulation treaty were considerably harsher than those of ten years before. This time all Muslim inhabitants were offered a drastic choice between baptism in the Christian faith or expulsion. The vast majority chose the former, thus becoming what were thereafter known as “Moriscos” (Barrios Aguilera 2002, p. 67–82, 279, 553; Ladero Quesada 1988, p. 291–306; Peinado Santaella 2011, p. 152–67).

In the context of this general forced conversion, the Islamic pious endowments ceased to have any real meaning, with the immediate result that these properties were absorbed into the holdings of the Crown of Castile. At first, the tendency was to respect the various ends of the *habices*, given the similar nature of the new purposes to which they were applied: thus, for example, the Crown allocated the incomes intended for the ransoming of Muslim captives to the freeing of Christian prisoners held by Islamic forces (Garrad 1953, p. 43; Vincent 1978, p. 85). However, occasionally, after their confiscation the lifetime use of such properties was awarded as a royal grant to individual Moriscos in reward for their having collaborated with the Christian authorities, an action intended to encourage conversion by illustrating its benefits.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> According to the terms of this capitulation agreement, the *habices* would remain invulnerable to embargo and should be administered by Muslim jurists (in Arabic *faqīh*, pl. *fuqahā'*); see Galán Sánchez (1991, p. 88, 186–89).

<sup>8</sup> While this sort of concession remained in effect, the property in question would remain in the hands of a private individual until his death, at which time it would revert to its prior designated function as a *habiz*. See Galán Sánchez (1991, p. 260–82, 385–404), Galán Sánchez (1988, p. 277–89), Galán Sánchez (2010, p. 105–29, 173–75), Garrido García (2014, p. 45–64), Ladero Quesada (1988, p. 277–81), Ortego Rico (2011, p. 279–318) and Padilla Mellado (2009–2010, p. 139–48).

Subsequently, the Crown proceeded to divide the *habices* among various institutions according to the original purpose to which they had been assigned under Islamic rule. Thus, the Crown kept for itself a certain portion of these properties destined to beneficence and earmarked for the destitute, ransom of captives, hospitals, instruction and houses of ablutions (Hernández Benito 1990, p. 45–52). But the bulk of *habices*—those designated specifically for religious purposes—were added to the swelling estate of the Catholic Church.<sup>9</sup> It must be borne in mind that the conversion of a sizable part of the population meant that good number of what had been mosques were transformed into churches, which thereby became the beneficiaries of the pious endowments previously assigned to the Islamic places of worship. Of the territories making up the kingdom of Granada, the oldest testimonies in this regard come from the city of Almería. Following its seizure from the Nasrids in 1489, the Catholic monarchs—Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragón—awarded to the Church all the property that had belonged to the mosques, thus setting a precedent that they would later have to follow in other parts of the kingdom. In fact, on 14 October 1501, Isabella and Ferdinand ceded to the different parishes of the Archbishopric of Granada all the *habices* allocated for the maintenance of mosques and *rābiṭas*,<sup>10</sup> hence preserving the religious nature of these endowments, though this transfer did not take actual effect until 1 January 1506. In addition, in 1502 the Church received all the city of Granada's *habices* related to the ransoming of prisoners and the insane asylum's annual income of 20,000 *maravedís*. This gift from the Crown was made in recognition of services rendered by the Church during the war for Granada and in gratitude to God for having brought about the Christian victory (Carballeira Debas and Álvarez de Morales 2013, p. 155–65).

Unfortunately, the transfer of administration from Islamic to Christian hands facilitated acts of fraud. In general, inferior management by the latter meant that *habices* pertaining to the Crown were rarely profitable (Barrios Aguilera 2002, p. 109–10). As for ecclesiastical *habices*, after 1506 these properties came under the supervision of the Granada

<sup>9</sup>In the case of Crown- or Church--held *habices* linked to lands ruled by feudal nobles, these properties generally ended up being managed by the noble in question, thus forming part of the structure of his estate, as happened in the Granadine Marquesado of El Cenete. See Díaz López (2011, p. 207–22).

<sup>10</sup>In al-Andalus, in the Nasrid period, *rābiṭas* were used not only as small mosques or oratories, but also as gathering places by groups of mystics.

Archbishopric's Accounting Office and at first these too functioned poorly, in large part due to confusion on the part of those entrusted with their administration. It must be taken into consideration that under Islamic rule the mosques may have managed not only their own resources, but also the pious endowments which served other purposes as well. Indeed there is evidence that some Islamic places of worship exercised control over donation incomes allocated to benefit the poor and needy. If one pious legacy supporting a mosque and another intended to serve the destitute were entrusted to a single individual, it would hardly be surprising if over time these goods became difficult to distinguish (Hernández Benito 1990, p. 46). Likewise, lands pertaining to the Church were sometimes usurped by local notables. And tenants too might be negligent in reporting to the Church the inheritance of leases held in perpetuity or duly keeping the leased property in good condition.<sup>11</sup> The consequent dwindling of incomes from these assets prompted the Christian authorities to try to normalise the situation by documenting the exact locations of these properties in order to have a reliable inventory of the *habices*. Precise knowledge of its holdings would allow the Church to return some order to their management, while at the same time permitting more effective exploitation. The drawing up of such inventories and registers was entrusted to a group of scribes who travelled to the localities in question and compiled in writing all the information possible about each endowed property. The resulting documents were known as “books of *habices*” (Álvarez de Morales 2007, p. 9–12; Carballeira Debasa and Álvarez de Morales 2013, p. 159–63).

At present, the Granadine books of *habices* comprise various collections of manuscripts, several of which are kept in the Cathedral Archive and more especially the Historical Archive of the Granada Diocese (AHDG).<sup>12</sup> Nonetheless, it is the Simancas General Archive (AGS)—in the Castilian province of Valladolid—that holds the oldest documents of this sort, dating from between 1501 and 1503 (Carballeira Debasa and Álvarez de Morales 2013, p. 157–58). It should be noted that none of these

<sup>11</sup> Concerning the existence of *habices* in private hands, see Galán Sánchez (1991, p. 186–89).

<sup>12</sup> The catalogue prepared in 1954 by Villanueva and Soria (1954, p. 460–61) noted the existence of fifteen such documents ranging in date from 1505 to 1721. This number would be significantly higher were we to add—besides the books documenting property boundaries (*libros de apeo*)—the registers of income derived from leases given in perpetuity (*censos perpetuos*), which were produced from the sixteenth century until well into the nineteenth century, as we will see below. A full revision and updating of the catalogue is long overdue.

documentation collections have been subjected to a thorough investigation, nor have they been published in full. Perhaps this is part of the reason why to date there exists no comprehensive study that might offer an overall perspective of the Granadine *habices* in the Christian period.

Given its importance in terms of sheer numbers, I will focus my attention now on the aforementioned books of *habices* associated with the Catholic Church in Granada. These books constitute inventories of properties that the Church held both in the city and in the surrounding towns. Most of these *habices* consisted of real estate: while some were related with agriculture, such as plots of land, trees or water sources, others were linked to human habitation, such as houses, shops and ovens. The books of *habices* listed every element that might help to identify and locate the property in question in physical space, with specific reference made to the adjacent properties. This detailed description included information about the area of any land that was arable and what it produced, as well as the water supplies available and how they were used. When there existed a written leasing agreement (*carta de censo*), this fact was duly noted, including the name of the lessee and monetary value of the lease transaction.

### 9.3 CHURCH PROPERTIES IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY GRANADA: *BIENES HABICES* VERSUS *BIENES DE FÁBRICA*

Given its length and contents, the book of *habices* of 1530<sup>13</sup> constitutes a prime example by which one may understand the status of Church properties in the kingdom of Granada in the first half of the sixteenth century, providing as it does a comprehensive register of ecclesiastical holdings in the population centres and their associated territories within the districts or *tabas* (from the Arabic *ṭā'a*) of Ugíjar and Andarax in the Alpujarra region for that year.<sup>14</sup>

Actually, this document offers two separate registers of the properties that had been the object of donations of a religious nature. On the one

<sup>13</sup>This document is in the keeping of the Historical Archive of the Granada Diocese, in whose catalogue it is listed under the title *Libro de las rentas de los habices de las Alpujarras. Año 1530*, with the locating information given as “Libros de Archivo, caja n° 45 (2)”. This documentary source is made up of 356 folios with writing on both recto and verso.

<sup>14</sup>The Alpujarra is the region situated on the southern slopes of the Sierra Nevada and includes part of the modern-day provinces of Granada and Almería. It is a very large area, bordered by this mountain range to the north and the Mediterranean to the south. See Trillo San José (1994, p. 15, 236).

hand, it contains an inventory of the *bienes habices* properly speaking, which were originally set up during the Islamic period to benefit Islamic places of worship, while, on the other hand, it recorded what are called *bienes de fábrica*, which were established under Christian rule by Moriscos in their testamentary bequests following the enforced conversion of the population. These legacies may have been intended to serve as unequivocal proof that the individual's new adherence to Christianity was genuine. It should be recalled that, while the Moriscos were formally Christian, most of them continued to clandestinely practise their Islamic faith. A written testament, therefore, may have represented the only way to dispel suspicions about the sincerity of the conversion.<sup>15</sup>

Unsurprisingly, it is the first register, that of the ecclesiastical *bienes habices*, that makes up the bulk of content of this documentary source, given that it was the *habices* that constituted the main purpose of the inventory. And the large number of these old Islamic pious legacies reflects that Muslim presence in the Peninsula had a history of some eight centuries. By contrast, in 1530, when the manuscript was written, there were still relatively few cases of Moriscos donating property to the Church, the forced conversion of the Mudéjars having taken place a mere three decades previously. Nonetheless, the document records *bienes de fábrica* from most of the villages within the Alpujarra *tabas* of Ugíjar and Andarax. Regarding the sorts of properties most associated with these donations made by converts, in the vast majority of instances they are trees (most often mulberry and sometimes olive), and only occasionally cultivable fields and even more rarely houses or ovens (Carballeira Debasa 2018, p. 24–25).

Although the amount of information concerning the *bienes de fábrica* is relatively meagre, the manuscript proves eloquent about how they were managed and administered. In general, there existed a tendency to keep separate the two kinds of endowment, the document clearly stating that the *bienes de fábrica* neither form part of the *habices* nor are rented out together; in other words, they are administered separately. At its most extreme, this segregation of *habices* from *bienes de fábrica* can be seen when the two categories benefit in equal parts a particular property, such as a mulberry tree, with each half of the tree managed independently. This

<sup>15</sup> Regarding this use of testaments by Moriscos in sixteenth-century Granada, see García Pedraza (2002, p. 259–337).



circumstance is corroborated by the statement that *bienes de fábrica* had their own particular administrator (Carballeira Debas 2018, p. 24–25).

With regard to how the ecclesiastical real estate functioned and was exploited economically, the book of *habices* of 1530 makes it clear that the leasing out of lands and trees was a widespread practice; though to a lesser degree, there are also references to the leasing of buildings, such as houses, shops, ovens, mills and so forth. It is important to bear in mind that the Church constituted a powerful group of landowners who exploited their properties indirectly. Practically the only type of lease noted in the inventory is emphyteutic, meaning that properties were exploited in perpetuity by the lease-holder and his heirs; in order to transfer exploitation rights to a third party, the tenant had to be authorized by the owner, to whom he would have to pay a transfer tax (Andújar Castillo and Díaz López 2000, p. 70).<sup>16</sup> The text reveals a dynamic whereby the group of ecclesiastical landowners reserved rights to the property and conceded useful domain over it to the Morisco peasantry, who acted as lease-holders in return for the annual payment of rent in cash. The amount obtained was used to serve the needs of the churches linked to the respective foundations, that is to say, to pay the upkeep of the building and any expenses generated by the regular celebration of mass. All the evidence indicates that the large number of *habices* ended up becoming an important source of income for local Christian temples, just as they had been in the past for Islamic places of worship.<sup>17</sup>

#### 9.4 CHURCH *HABICES* IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY GRANADA: HYPOTHESES ABOUT THEIR ULTIMATE FATE

As indicated above, the *habices* belonging to the Catholic Church enjoyed a special status in the Castilian legal context. It has already been noted that the records of *habiz* boundaries from the first half of the sixteenth century give reliable testimony that these pious legacies dating from the Andalusí period were kept strictly separate from other types of Church property,

<sup>16</sup>For its part, the Crown generally rented out the *habices* it had reserved for itself; in this case, usufruct rights to the property were granted for a period of several years. See Hernández Benito (1990, p. 42).

<sup>17</sup>The means by which the *habices* were made productive did not change from the Islamic to the Christian period. On the renting or leasing of these sort of properties in al-Andalus, see Carballeira Debas (2002, p. 297–309), García Sanjuán (2002, p. 131–37) and García Sanjuán (2007, p. 132–41).

with their own fully independent administration. Given these circumstances, it is worth asking how long the *habices* persisted under Christian rule.

A preliminary review of the documentation collections contained in various historical archives in Granada<sup>18</sup> has proved particularly revealing in this regard. The existence of a set of books recording the income generated by the leasing of numerous ecclesiastical *habices* in the city of Granada, as well as the regions of the Lecrín Valley, Vega and Sierra reveals that this class of property was regarded as separate from other Church goods, having its own accounts until a fairly late date, well into the nineteenth century. The continued use of the term *habiz* makes it clear that this Islamic system of pious donation was preserved in the collective Christian memory for a very long time indeed.

In general terms, the investigations undertaken thus far allow us to trace the persistence of a good number of *habices* pertaining to the Church up to 1828. This in large part reflects the documentation collection held in the Historical Archive of the Granada Diocese that provides information on rental incomes generated by this sort of property.<sup>19</sup> After this date, however, track of the *habices* is lost. What happened to them? It is plausible to conjecture that a considerable number of these assets succumbed to the phenomenon known as the “Spanish confiscation”, the long historical, economic and social process which began at the end of the eighteenth century and continued in various phases in the course of the nineteenth century. This process consisted of the forced expropriation by the State and subsequent selling off by public auction of the previously inalienable lands and properties which the so-called *manos muertas* (“dead hands”) had accumulated through donations and wills or acquired from individuals who died intestate.<sup>20</sup> This is the case of the Catholic Church and its affiliated religious orders.

<sup>18</sup> Documents held by the Historical Archive of the Granada Diocese and the Historical Archive of the Province of Granada have been particularly rich sources in this regard.

<sup>19</sup> The locating information for these documents is “Libros de archivo, cajas 44, 45 y 46”.

<sup>20</sup> Also subject to these successive waves of expropriation were the untilled or common lands belonging to municipalities. The expropriation and sale of such properties (“dead hands”) is a phenomenon by no means limited to Spain, but it is certainly one of the distinguishing features of the Spanish Liberal governments of the nineteenth century, whose goal was—at least in theory—not only to increase revenue and collect it more effectively, but also to create a middle class of farmers who were owners of the lands they cultivated. For a broad overview of this phenomenon, see Martí Gilabert (2003), Rueda Hernanz (1997) and

The data available suggests that most of the *habices* were not affected by the expropriation law passed in 1820 and then repealed in 1824.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, it seems likely that the bulk of these properties did fall victim to the confiscation measures implemented in 1836 by Juan Álvarez de Mendizábal, the then Minister of State, War, Finance and Navy.<sup>22</sup> But assuming this to be the case, why is the receipt of incomes in the period from 1829 to 1835 not documented? If one assumes that, during the interval in question no expropriation of *habices* was carried out, perhaps it is the case that a register of these incomes did exist at the time, but has since vanished.<sup>23</sup>

But even if one accepts the hypothesis that a large part of the *habices* associated to the Church were expropriated in 1836, it does appear that a few of them managed to escape not only Mendizábal's measures, but also those taken in 1855 by Pascual Madoz while he was Minister of Finance.<sup>24</sup> Proof of this can be seen in a register book deposited in the Historical Archive of the Province of Granada (AHPG), which details the accounts related to the *habices* pertaining to various parishes of the province (Puello Pavés and Robles Río 2009).<sup>25</sup> In this volume there are more than a few references to the collection of rental incomes in the 1860s and 1870s. It is even possible to find recorded a specific instance of the receipt of *habiz* revenues for the year 1886, which suggests that some *habices* were left unscathed by the expropriation policy executed in 1868–1875.<sup>26</sup> Whatever the case, this is clearly a broad topic of considerable complexity, a full understanding of which will require a specific in-depth study and analysis.

Simón Segura (1973). For a more specific analysis of the economic difficulties faced by the Church in nineteenth-century Granada, see García Valverde (1983).

<sup>21</sup> Regarding expropriation during what is called the “Liberal Triennium” (1820–1823), see, for example, González de Molina and Fontana Lázaro (1985).

<sup>22</sup> Concerning Mendizábal's confiscation measures, see, for instance, Rubio Grande (1996) and Rueda Hernanz (1986).

<sup>23</sup> In other areas making up the kingdom of Granada, such as the region of Los Vélez in Almería, there exists evidence of emphyteutic leases related to *habices* as late as 1834; see Roth (2016, p. 18–29).

<sup>24</sup> For more on the Madoz expropriation, see, for example, Gómez Oliver (1985).

<sup>25</sup> Locating information for this manuscript is given as “L4042”.

<sup>26</sup> Regarding the expropriations carried out between 1868 and 1874, see Cárceles Ortí (1979).

## 9.5 CONCLUSIONS

The Christian conquest of the Nasrid kingdom of Granada had a major impact on the social and economic structure, not least because it entailed the transfer of ownership of properties and rights from Islamic to Christian institutions. It is within this process that the reallocation of Andalusí pious foundations to Castilian institutions took place.

In the particular case of *habices* that ended up in the hands of the Catholic Church, one should draw special attention to the fact that, far from becoming part and parcel of the mass of Church holdings, these assets maintained over a very long time—indeed, until their disappearance four centuries later—an independent status. The documentation that has been preserved shows that starting in the sixteenth century, the *habices* belonging to the Church were not only regarded as a separate category from the other sorts of ecclesiastical properties, but managed separately too, with their own special administrators entrusted with the formalising of leases and collection of rents. This is reflected in the early inventories recording the boundaries of these goods, the books of *habices*. These initial registers were followed by the accounting ledgers maintained by the Church to keep track of the collection of incomes generated by these assets, information that continued to be regularly documented over the years until the nineteenth century.<sup>27</sup> Regarding the final end of the Church *habices*, my primary working hypothesis is that these foundations fell victim to the expropriation policies enacted by the Liberal governments of Spain in the nineteenth century.

In passing from Islamic to Christian administration, the *habices* present certain elements of continuity. On the one hand, the Arabic name of these types of goods—*hubs*—is preserved in the Arabised Spanish term *habiz*, adapted to Castilian phonology. On the other hand, in this phase of patrimonial transfer the various sorts of Islamic pious endowments—religious, charitable, defensive and so on—generally preserved their respective status, independently of the fact that they might at times be confused; in this fashion, the purposes to which these legacies had been directed in Andalusí times continued to be respected. At the same time, the ways in which these properties had been made productive under Islamic rule through the paying of rents was also maintained into the Christian period. If one

<sup>27</sup> Even in the nineteenth century reference can be found to the *administrador de avisas*, that is, the administrator of *habices*.

assesses in the overall context of the economic importance of these type of goods, it is clear that the incomes they yielded meant for the churches they supported—just as they had been for the mosques they replaced—a significant revenue by which to cover their needs.

Nonetheless, one may note elements of rupture or transformation, given that the ends served by the *habices* were no longer Islamic, but rather Christian, and the system, therefore, had to be adapted to this new circumstance. Here one should consider the use that the Castilian Crown made of *habices* through the concession of lifetime grants to noteworthy Morisco collaborators, such as those Muslim jurists who converted to Christianity. Moreover, unlike what occurred in the Andalusí period, the *habices* of a religious nature were leased in perpetuity and inherited by the lessee's heirs.

In short, the body of documentary sources preserved reveals that, though they perforce were modified in accordance with the new historical context, the ecclesiastical *habices* persisted for a very long time, segregated from all other Church property and maintaining their own particular set of features. From this perspective, the *habices* are a perfect example of how medieval models originating in al-Andalus survived into the subsequent Christian era, in harmonic co-existence with others of more recent development.

**Acknowledgments** Research for this paper has been carried out within the project “La Granada nazari en el siglo XV: microhistoria de una entidad islámica en Occidente” [“Nasrid Granada in the fifteenth century: microhistory of an Islamic entity in the West”], FFI2016-79252-P (AEI/FEDER, EU).

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PART IV

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Circulation of Cultural Goods in the  
Medieval Mediterranean



# Siculo-Arabic, Andalusí and Fatimid Ivory Works: Iconographic Transfers and Visual Propaganda

*Noelia Silva Santa-Cruz*

There has been a recent shift towards a view of the medieval Mediterranean region as a space of connectivity and cultural interaction, which has resulted, during the last years, in a transcultural and global art history. And this has increased the attention on the role played by the circulation of luxury goods for the transmission of ornamental designs and iconographic motifs between the Islamic territories and the Christian Mediterranean societies. This chapter has been included in this context, looking to reflect on the assimilation by the multi-ethnic and multi-religious Sicilian court of the Norman period (twelfth century) of the propagandistic visual lexicon of the Fatimid Caliphate and al-Andalus—the two most creative and original Islamic art centres of the Mediterranean basin—through the movement of sumptuary objects and the relocation of craftsmen. Both ways stimulated the translation of promotional themes that migrated

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M. Marcos Cobaleda (ed.), *Artistic and Cultural Dialogues in the Late Medieval Mediterranean*, Mediterranean Perspectives,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53366-3\\_10](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53366-3_10)

between the different media and materials, exercising a great impact on ivory carving works.

Around 1060 the Normans began the conquest of Sicily, a territory that had remained under Islamic rule for around 200 years (827–1061),<sup>1</sup> and that before the advent of Aghlabids and Fatimids had been part of the Byzantine Empire. The great ethnoreligious diversity existing then in the island, made possible to forge, by the time the conquest was consolidated, and at the same time that the new state was being set up, a hybrid, heterogeneous society, as a result of a plural and complex cultural reality where the weight of the Islamic component continued to be very intense. Although the Hauteville dynasty assumed political power, Muslims continued to live there and even became de facto integrated into the administration and the court, forming a multicultural and intensely Islamicized community.<sup>2</sup>

The existence of a complex political and propaganda project that involved the Arabization of many of the aspects linked to the monarchy can be observed since the founding of the unified kingdom of Sicily–Southern Italy by the monarch Roger II (1130–1154) (Johns 1993, p. 133–59). The administrative reform undertaken at that time was modelled on the Fatimid state organization and involved, among other measures, the incorporation into the official documents issued by the royal chancery (*dīwān*) of the writing in naskh calligraphy (Johns 2002, p. 257–83). Similarly, the Christian kings of Sicily appropriated the official Arabic titles in their documents and coinage.<sup>3</sup> In fact, both resources would very soon be transferred from the bureaucratic texts to the commemorative epigraphy.

The ethnic pluralism of the Palermitan court with scholars, statesmen, officials and scientists from diverse backgrounds (Byzantine, Andalusí, Latin, North African, etc.) fostered the issuance of official commemorative inscriptions in several languages, such as the patronage of a clepsydra

<sup>1</sup>The most complete study on Islamic Sicily can be found in Amari (1933–1939). Recent publications include Metcalfe (2009).

<sup>2</sup>It is worth mentioning the testimony of the pilgrim Ibn Yūbayr, who visited in 1185 several insular cities on his trip back to al-Andalus from Mecca. See Ibn Yūbayr (2007, 492–521).

<sup>3</sup>Roger II adopted the formula *al-muʿazz bi-llāh* (the powerful through God) and William II the formula *mustaʿizz bi-llāh* (the desirous of power through God) (Johns 2002, p. 269).

by Roger II dated in 1142, conserved in the Royal Palace (Johns 2006, I, p. 512–13, VIII.4), written in the three official languages: Latin, Greek and Arabic.<sup>4</sup> Although, other examples of monumental epigraphs of this type have survived until our time, including a quadrilingual one,<sup>5</sup> the oldest known record of the use of naskh calligraphy, located in the lower register of the slab.<sup>6</sup>

Faced with the predominance of large-scale plurilingual epigraphy, in those sumptuary objects produced in courtly workshops there is an inclination to the exclusive use of written dedications in Arabic, with a preference also for cursive calligraphy. In an Islamicized and largely Arabic-speaking society such as this one, the production of luxury goods, mainly ivory works and textiles, depended to a large extent on Muslim, local or perhaps foreign craftsmen, who tended to write the inscriptions in their vernacular language. This choice was probably dictated both by the ethnic origin of the artisans and by the important role that Arabic played within the official languages of the kingdom as public expression of royal authority, derived from the close link between the Norman–Arabic epigraphy and state administration (Dolezalek 2017, p. 168).

The adoption of Arabic borrowings from the new state organization created by Roger II and continued by his successors was a transcendental process that was reflected, as we have seen, in many aspects (Johns 1993).

<sup>4</sup>In one of the illustrations of the Book on Sicilian Affairs (*Liber ad honorem Augusti sive de rebus Siculis*) of Peter of Eboli (1196) there is a recreation of the royal chancery, where scribes work by pairs in writing texts in three languages, well differentiated by their ethnic features and clothing. The labels identify them as “Greek” (*notarii Greci*); “Saracen” (*notarii Saraceni*) and “Latin” (*notarii Latini*). In Petrus de Ebulo (1994, 58–59, fol. 101r).

<sup>5</sup>In addition to the aforementioned piece, there are two more that were inscribed in Latin, Greek and Arabic: another stone slab preserved in the Civic Museum of Termini Imerese, which commemorates the construction of a public monument, perhaps a fountain, by a prominent official of Roger II, the eunuch Petrus-Barrūn; and a tombstone, today in the Museum of Zisa in Palermo, commissioned by the Palatine clergyman Grisanto for the grave of his father Drogo in 1153. The epitaph of 1149 for the tomb of Anna, mother of the priest, also in the Museum of Zisa, includes the text in Judeo-Arabic as well (Johns 2006, I, p. 510–11, VIII.3, and p. 519–23, VIII.7 b-c).

<sup>6</sup>In addition to a means of propaganda and royal legitimation, the issuance of these inscriptions can be interpreted as a procedure to reach as many readers as possible, since those who spoke two or three languages could hardly read and write in only one of them. See Johns (2006, II, 62).

In addition to the assimilation of administrative, calligraphic and laudatory formulas, one of the most interesting manifestations, which directly affected the figurative arts, had to do with the configuration of the visual language of power exaltation. At the time of creating this propaganda system, the Norman rulers appeared ambivalent, combining heterogeneous images denoting a selective and refined use of different artistic languages: Byzantine, Latin and Islamic.<sup>7</sup> The effigy of *rex christianus*, irrevocable for the monarch, was literally copied from the Byzantine imperial iconography from the Macedonian era, as in the mosaic of Santa Maria dell' Ammiraglio, where Roger II, crowned by Christ, is covered by an aura of sacred sanctity, wearing even the imperial *loros*, exhibiting his role as a devoted patron of the Christian cult.<sup>8</sup> Along with this Byzantizing spiritual iconography, a number of promotional images were also institutionalized within the palatine setting, that referred to the Arabic visual tradition and that completed the mixed political formula to which the rulers aspired: a model of caliphal emulation, on the one hand, but founded on the autocracy of the *basileus*, on the other hand (Bongianino 2012, p. 108).

This repertoire of images relates to the representation of political power included both in the main iconographic programmes of the court as well as in the sumptuary arts. The images show not only the reception of the legacies of Antiquity and the Persian world, but mainly the intensity reached by the phenomenon of transculturation in the medieval Eastern Mediterranean region, and in which Norman Sicily became fully integrated.<sup>9</sup> The mobility of portable artefacts transgressing in their transit the conventional boundaries between the different Islamic kingdoms and Byzantium contributed to the circulation of themes and models by favouring exchanges and interaction between these territories, as regards to material and visual culture (Hoffman 2001). This circumstance, far from implying a unidirectional transmission, triggered a multiplicity of multidirectional intersections where it is often very complex to identify individual sources of origin (Hoffman and Redford 2017, p. 406–07).

<sup>7</sup>For a reflection on this phenomenon see Bongianino (2012).

<sup>8</sup>Kitzinger already highlighted the close resemblance of this panel and the Byzantine ivory relief at the Pushkin Museum, Moscow, which shows the Emperor Constantine VII (r. 913–959) crowned by Christ. See Kitzinger (1990, p. 190–91, note 344, pl. 190).

<sup>9</sup>For this concept, see Hoffman and Redford (2017).

The shared imagery of royal power and glorification associated with the Islamic cultural sphere had a great impact on the iconography of Siculo-Arabic painted ivories.<sup>10</sup> Often in close connection with the courtly art of the Mediterranean, mainly with the portable arts of both Fatimid Egypt and Islamic Spain, as well as with the main royal visual programmes in Norman Sicily, the Cappella Palatina and the Reception Room (the so-called Norman Stanza), both at the Royal Palace of Palermo, which are considered authentic manifestations of the underlying propaganda ideology of the Norman monarchy. These close connections denote the fluid migration of motifs not only through the political borders but also through the different artistic media (cross-media translations),<sup>11</sup> a phenomenon as fascinating as it is complex to trace in its diffusion and expansion processes.

As another modality of their public image, the Norman rulers assimilated and endorsed the stereotyped representation of the Muslim prince. In the paintings on the ceiling of the Cappella Palatina we can find several representations of a male figure seating, with his legs crossed, in a strictly frontal position, holding a cup in the body axis, and in the other hand a stem or vegetal sprout, accompanied by servants. In fact, this is a famous courtly theme that appears repeatedly in the Umayyad ivories of al-Andalus<sup>12</sup> and that evokes the abstract and impersonal image of the Caliph exhibiting the flowering branch, symbol of the State's prosperity, according to a typology of Abbasid heritage (Silva 2013, p. 90–94). As in some tenth-century Iranian coinage (e.g. the medallion at the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, inv. no. F1943.8) the monarch is wearing a three-peaked bonnet.<sup>13</sup> The Siculo-Arabic ivory carvings also gathers this propaganda image of the ruler in some of its most selected pieces, such as the cover of the casket kept at the Gemeentemuseum, The Hague (inv. no. 0758272)

<sup>10</sup>For this group, see Armando (2012a) and Silva (2017).

<sup>11</sup>This cross-media transit has been brilliantly exhibited in Hoffman (2011).

<sup>12</sup>We can find it, among others, on the frontal medallions of the al-Mughīra pyxis (Louvre Museum, Paris, c. 967–968) or on the Leyre casket, dedicated to 'Abd al-Mālik, the son of al-Manṣūr (Navarra Museum, Pamplona, c. 1004–1005). See Silva (2013, p. 215–19, no. 13, and p. 232–38, no. 21).

<sup>13</sup>We can find an identical iconography in the neighbouring Ifīqīya, on the marble relief coming from the palace of al-Qā'im in Mahdiyya (Bardo National Museum, Tunisia) dated in the Zirid period. The formal similarity with the paintings of the Cappella Palatina, has recently led the Tunisian researcher Faouzi Mahfoudh to suggest the controversial hypothesis that this piece was not a Zirid production, but possibly a Norman commission, coinciding with the occupation of this palace by officials of Roger II during the brief hiatus of his North African reign (1146–1160) (Bongianino 2012, p. 106).

(Cott 1939, Fig. 35c), in which, however, we can find an interesting variant: the three-pointed headdress present in the paintings has been replaced by a halo.

As a sign of divine power and authority, the use of the nimbus has its roots in classical Antiquity. In the Greek and Roman art, the heads of the gods, heroes and other distinguished persons are found with a disc-shaped halo.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, it is associated with the deified image of the emperor (Willers 2006). In Islam, its use is attested in the courtly sphere, at least since the Abbasid period.<sup>15</sup> In the Norman figurative arts, it can be traced on both human and zoomorphic representations painted on ivory, as well as in a large number of figures on the ceiling of the Cappella Palatina. The stylistic coincidences that can be identified between the two media are remarkable, such as the nimbated harpies represented on the ceiling and on the casket of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, coming from the Cathedral of Bari, Italy (inv. no. 603–1902) (Cott 1939, Fig. 39d; Dodd 2011, p. 156, Figs. 5–6).

As in other bureaucratic and epigraphic aspects already mentioned, the closest reference model to explain the assimilation of the halo in the Norman court should have been the Egyptian caliphate, as shown by productions on different media, which show the familiarity of the Fatimid artists with this element.<sup>16</sup> The constant diplomatic, cultural and commercial contacts between Sicily and Cairo led to a continuous flow of both people and objects.<sup>17</sup> These exchanges were further intensified by the likely arrival on the island of artisans from Egypt. Several authors have suggested that craftsmen of this origin working under the Norman royal

<sup>14</sup>A relation with the Mazdaic and Mithraic Light-religion of Persia has been suggested, most exactly from the Hvareno “the glory from above which makes the King an earthly god” (Ramsden 1941). However, as Ladner points out, the halo appears in pagan Greek and Roman art much earlier than in Persia and India, hence the Christian halo should be considered a continuation of the Roman motif (Ladner 1983, p. 147, note 124, and p. 149, notes 128, 131).

<sup>15</sup>See again the medallion of the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington (inv. no. F1943.8), where the ruler exhibits a halo on both the front and the back.

<sup>16</sup>Among others, the fragment of wall painting from Abū l-Sa‘ūd’s Ḥammām, Fuṣṭāṭ, eleventh century (Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo, inv. no. 12880) (Melikian-Chirvani 2018, p. 14) or a pair of lustre bowls, Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo, twelfth century (Dodd 2011, p. 157, figs. 7–8).

<sup>17</sup>The most important evidence of these relationships between the two courts is a letter from the caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ (r. 1130–1149) to the monarch Roger II, dated in 1137–1138 (Canard 1955). About these relationships see Johns (1993, 145–47).

patronage were the executors of the paintings on the ceiling of the Cappella Palatina of Palermo.<sup>18</sup> The stylistic coincidence and the transfer of conventional details between pictorial and ivory representations—and, among them, the aforementioned halo—might indicate that the same craftsmen or workshops could have participated in the pictorial execution of the Siculo-Arabic painted ivories group, at least in the pieces of higher quality related to outstanding commissions. The possibility of a Fatimid route for the arrival in the Norman court of such a stereotyped motif is further reinforced by the fact that in al-Andalus, the nimbus, the other great reference in terms of royal authority and production of iconographic models within the Islamic sphere, was hardly rooted.<sup>19</sup>

Another of the images assimilated by the Norman iconography as part of the figurative lexicon of glorification and personal prestige of the ruler was his representation on horseback as a falconer with the bird of prey resting on his hand or his forearm,<sup>20</sup> as seen again in the paintings of the Cappella Palatina and in a large number of painted ivory boxes, among others, those of the Tridentine Diocesan Museum (inv. no. 41) (Davi 1995, p. 210–11, no. 48; Armando 2012b), or the Cathedral of San Andrea, Veroli (Carboni 1997). Its formal similarity with both examples of Umayyad Andalusí ivory carvings<sup>21</sup> as with Fatimid courtly manufactures,<sup>22</sup> reinforces the hypothesis of a transmission of this shared imagery of royal power through portable sumptuary objects imported

<sup>18</sup>The “Fatimid thesis” for the origin of these painters was proposed by Ettinghausen, more than half a century ago, and has recently been recovered by Kapitaikin. See Ettinghausen (1942) and Kapitaikin (2005, 2011).

<sup>19</sup>Scarce examples of the use of the halo can be found in the Andalusí visual arts. The most relevant are the real and fabulous nimbated animals, on an arcade coming from the palace of the Ṭāʾifa king of Toledo al-Maʾmūn, discovered in 2002 at the Convent of Santa Fe, Toledo, which model seems to be related to the influx of sumptuary productions of Eastern origin and, in our opinion, possibly also Fatimids. For these archaeological remains, see Monzón and Martín (2006). For its iconographic connections with the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, see Rabasco (2019, 490–93).

<sup>20</sup>This iconography, included in the back of the aforementioned buyid medallion, is associated with the image of the caliph in Majesty.

<sup>21</sup>Pyxis, Louvre Museum, Paris (inv. no. OA 2774, c. 970) or the Leyre casket (Navarra Museum, Pamplona, c. 1004–1005). See Silva (2013, 223–25, no. 15 and 232–38, no. 21).

<sup>22</sup>Openwork ivory plaques from the Museum für Islamischen Kunst, Berlin and the Louvre Museum, OA 6265 see Contadini (2005, figs. 135, 137, 142) and Makariou (2012, 124–26); or the lustre pottery bowls of the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo, inv. no. 12880 and the Gallery of Art, Washington, inv. no. F.1941.12., see Melikian-Chirvani (2018, 87, 89).



from these thriving centres or other centres under its influence in the Mediterranean region.<sup>23</sup>

The uneven quality of the objects painted in ivory produced in the different Sicilian workshops, many of which are the result of mass-production (Shalem 2007; Silva 2017) aimed at a wider audience with lower purchasing power but equally eager of ostentation, highlights an interesting phenomenon: the popularization or “colloquialization”<sup>24</sup> of some of these images. As they become incorporated into serial objects for commercial purposes, they had to detach themselves from the propagandistic sense that they held within the restricted and elitist circle of the court circle, transforming themselves into monotonous themes of repertoire chosen and added in an encoded way to give prestige and lustre to both the recipient and its owner (Silva 2017, p. 161–62).

Deprived of their intrinsic value of royal promotion, many of these themes were presented replicated in cheaper pieces, presented isolated and under a process of decontextualization and formal simplification, transcribing in an abbreviated form the visual discourse of court culture common to the Mediterranean. The elegant and refined atmosphere of the court was recreated through the presence of musicians. This is the case of the harp player sitting cross-legged on the front parts of the casket of the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin (inv. no. KFMV 60) (Knipp 2011, p. 312–14, no. 2), or the drinkers who raise glasses or phials, such as the pyxis from the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore (inv. no. 71.311) (Randall 1985, p. 154, no. 226, pl. 60).<sup>25</sup> The evocation of hunting scenes through birds and quadrupeds presented alone or, in the case of the latter, attacking hares or gazelles is also frequent. Among them we can identify cheetahs, like in the caskets of the Kustgewerbemuseum, Berlin (inv. no. K. 3102) (Knipp 2011, p. 316–17, no. 3) or of the church of San Lorenzo, La Spezia, Portovenere (Di Fabio 1995, p. 202–03, no. 44, Fig.44.1).<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup>The main interest has been focused in the relationships between Sicily and Byzantium, the Islamic and the Eastern Mediterranean (Knipp 2005). More recently, attention has been redirected to the exchanges between Sicily and al-Andalus or the Maghreb (Kapitaikin 2013; Metcalfe and Rosser-Owen 2013).

<sup>24</sup>The term has been used by Kapitaikin (2017, 400).

<sup>25</sup>A parallel can be set between this type of drinker and, for example, the Fatimid ivory plaque of the Louvre Museum, Paris, inv. OA 6265/2 (Makariou 2012, p. 125) or the Andalusi fabric like the *juba* from Oña, Burgos (tenth century?) (Ali de Unzaga 2017).

<sup>26</sup>There are interesting examples of cheetah representations in the Norman architectural programs, like on the wooden ceiling of the Cefalù Cathedral or on the mosaics of the East

Also belonging to the hunting category with raptors is the falconer at the foot of the Halberstadt pyxis, Cathedral Treasury, Germany (Knipp 2011, p. 326–27, no. 8), closely connected thematically to the representation on the Andalusí pyxis dedicated to Prince al-Mughīra (Silva 2013, p. 215–19, no. 13). In both cases, the assistant specialized in the dressage and training of the birds, holds the bird of prey in one of his hands, protected by a glove, while in the other he carries a second bird as a decoy.

In pieces of presumable royal patronage, such as the painted casket from the treasure of Cappella Palatina of Palermo (Davì 1995, p. 170–73, no. 36 and Davì 2006), the recreation of the falconer's theme is enriched, becoming an authentic scene with narrative and descriptive interest, although deprived of spatial references. In addition to the falconer with the decoy held in the opposite hand to the one carrying the falcon, we can also find in the piece animals fighting at two levels, including, in the angles, speckled cheetah attacking gazelles, according to a common hunting system in the Islamic world, where the hawk attacked the head and eyes of the prey, and the cheetah followed him. The cover of this casket also stands out for the emulation of court ceremonies or parades with the participation of exotic animals. On the left, there is an elephant covered with a rich textile caparison on which two characters with turbans ride, while on the right an assistant leads a giraffe by the bridle. Ceremonial parades of this type were frequent in the Egyptian Caliphate as part of the royal magnificence. Al-Maqrīzī narrates how al-Ḥākim celebrated, in 1005, with great pomp the feast of fast-breaking (*ʿīd al-fiṭr*) organizing a procession with six elephants and five giraffes (al-Maqrīzī 1967–1973, II, 58, mentioned in Behrens-Abouseif 2018, p. 66, note 43). The close resemblance of the giraffe's scene to the one represented on an Egyptian bowl of lustre ware pottery (Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 749) (Seipel 1998, p. 105, no. 53; Melikian-Chirvani 2018, p. 74) allows one to speculate about the way in which the Norman promotional iconography copied, almost literally, prestigious courtly motifs, originated in the Fatimid court, and transferred through the reception of luxury goods.

Along with commercial transactions, the exchange of diplomatic gifts between royal courts or embassies probably functioned as one of the most plausible means of transmission in the process of disseminating the iconography of power, given the mimetic attitude between the different

and West walls of the Norman Hall in the Norman Palace, both dated in the twelfth century. See Fontana (2011, 128).

kingdoms as far as visual propaganda is concerned. The dispatch of these official presents is well documented between Palermo and Cairo in the case of the monarchs Roger II and al-Ḥāfiz (Johns 1993, p. 146) and also between William II and the Almohad Caliph Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf on the occasion of the treaty concluded between them in 577/ 1181.<sup>27</sup> Although in most cases we only have a literary reference to these rich objects, some of them could have survived. The ivory-incrusted casket of the Cappella Palatina could have been a Fatimid diplomatic gift to the Norman kings (Demma 1995, 2006), as well as the rock crystal aquamanile found today at the Louvre Museum, coming from the treasury of the Saint-Denis Abbey, and which filigreed gold stopper has been identified as a production from Palermo (inv. no. Mr. 333) (Makariou 2012, p. 127–29). These precious imported pieces, incorporated into the royal treasury, had to exert an undoubted iconographic influence on the ideologists in charge of defining the propaganda imagery of the Norman monarchy. The aforementioned box shows on its surface repeated versions of the famous and old promotional theme of the animal combat, in which the ruler is incarnated allegorically as a predator, an eagle or a lion, dominating his enemies, represented as weak animals, always herbivores (hare or gazelle). An imagery of power spread through the princely cycle common to the Islamic and Byzantine worlds, whose origins can be traced back to the Sumerian civilization (engraved silver Vase of Entemena, King of Lagash, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. AO 2674, c. 2400 a.C.) and the Achaemenid Persian Empire (stone reliefs on the western façade of the west staircase of the Palace of Darius at Persepolis, *Tachara*, c. 359–338 a.C) (Curtis and Tallis 2005, p. 78–81) and that, due to pieces like these, was completely assimilated in the Norman court, where its use was restricted selectively to ceremonial spaces of special symbolic value, such as the mosaic vault of the Norman Stanza, dominated by the triumphant eagle attacking a hare in the centre, just like in the paintings of the Cappella Palatina (Hoffman 2001, p. 34, 36).<sup>28</sup> This imagery is repeated in the ornamentation of the royal insignia (Hoffman 2001, p. 29), such as Roger II mantle of coronation (Kunsthistorischen Museum, Schatzkammer, Vienna) where the prey

<sup>27</sup> The Norman monarch sent to the caliph a gift that included a large gemstone in the shape of a horse’s hoof (al-Marrākushī 1881, p. 181–82, mentioned in Kapitaikin 2013, p. 133).

<sup>28</sup> This author already highlighted the coincidences of this theme in its different versions with the royal ivory boxes from Islamic Spain, such as the cover of the Leyre casket, c. 1004–05 (Silva 2013, p. 232–38, no. 21).

is in this case replaced by a camel (Bauer 2006, I, p. 45–49, I.1). Likewise, the eagle with the wings wide open, an emblem of power that dates back to Ancient Rome, is insistently requested by the Norman rulers as a promotional image, both in their heraldry and again in representative domains such as the Cappella Palatina, the Zisa Palace (front part of the Fontana Hall fountain) or in regalia like the sword of Federico II (Kunsthistorischen Museum, Schatzkammer, Vienna) (Trnek 2006). The formal configuration of this design also derives from portable artefacts, highlighting a narrow parallel with Andalusí pieces of ivory such as the openwork pyxis dedicated to the caliph al-Hakam II (Victoria and Albert Museum, London, inv. no. 217/1865) (Silva 2013, p. 225–27, no. 16, Fig. 130) as well as with representations in fabrics from Byzantium or Islamic Spain, many of which are documented as having arrived to Sicily and Southern Italy through the trade routes (Kapitaikin 2013, p. 117–18), enabling the inter-media exchange.

In the light of the foregoing, we can conclude that the Norman monarchs resorted simultaneously to the use of several *facies* or artistic languages to have their legitimizing message reach different audiences. Not only did they employ a byzantizing vocabulary of classical heritage, but they also used a large number of borrowings imported from the Fatimid Caliphate and al-Andalus to support their propagandistic discourse. The frequent use of commemorative epigraphy in naskh characters as well as a figurative lexicon easily understood by the broader Arab sector of the population, allowed them to be in direct relation with the visual culture shared by the closest Western Islamic territories, appropriating and making use of the collective repertoire of themes that configured the power languages of these courts.

Hence, the propagandistic imagery actively circulated between these territories and was transmitted across-media by the means of portable artefacts, as well as artists that would relocate between those kingdoms, blurring the borders between separate societies. These networks of connections stimulated several dynamics, of connectivity, of transfer and of cross-cultural exchange, which contributed to forge the unique hybridization of the artistic forms and the royal imagery that took place in Norman Sicily, encouraging the perception of the medieval Mediterranean region as a globalized and transcultural scenario.

**Acknowledgments** This paper is part of the National Plan Research Project I+D+i ref. RTI2018-093880-B-100 “Al-Andalus, arte, ciencia y contextos en un Mediterráneo abierto. De Occidente a Egipto y Siria”.

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# Ornamental Transfers in Textile Production in Almohad and Nasrid Periods

*Laura Rodríguez Peinado*

## 11.1 INTRODUCTION: ORIGIN OF THE TEXTILE PRODUCTION IN AL-ĀNDALUS

Textile production was one of the most prosperous industries in al-Andalus. In the mid-eighth century sericulture was introduced in the fertile plains of Andalusia and, during the reign of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II (822–852), when the orientalization of the court took place with the arrival of Ziryāb (Grabar 1992, p. 7), the *Dār al-Ṭirāz* already existed, as a state-controlled manufacture of luxury fabrics (Rodríguez Peinado 2012, p. 271–76; 2017a, p. 25).<sup>1</sup> The weavers who settled in al-Andalus came from different Islamic lands; hence, the Eastern influence was always

<sup>1</sup> About the *ṭirāz*, see Mackie (2015, p. 86–88).

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present in the technique and decoration of Andalusī textiles (Rodríguez Peinado 2019).<sup>2</sup> In the first centuries, the decorative repertoire was influenced by productions from Egypt, Syria, Byzantium and textiles coming from Baghdad (Partearroyo Lacaba 2005, p. 48–56; 2007, p. 376–91). The commercial exchanges facilitated the imitation of these fabrics in al-Andalus, generating an industry that allowed marketing of their products to Christian Europe, as well as to Egypt, Syria and other Eastern territories.<sup>3</sup>

Until the tenth century, the *Dār al-Ṭirāz* was installed in Cordoba, although there were *ṭirāz* workshops in other cities (Serjeant 1972, p. 169–76; Serrano-Piedecasas Fernández 1986, p. 211), but from the eleventh century onwards, the main textile industry of al-Andalus was located in Almeria. This city had one of the most important ports from the peninsula where ships arrived loaded with exotic merchandise and departed full of silks, ceramics, marbles and other luxury objects. Al-Zuhri, in the twelfth century, defines the city as the *alcaiceria* and *atarazana* of al-Andalus, where excellent fabrics were manufactured (Molina López and Álvarez de Morales 1993, p. 80–81). According to al-Idrīsī, there were 800 looms in the city dedicated to silk fabrics, 1000 for tunics and brocades and many others for silk and gold fabrics, so-called *siklatun* (Serjeant 1972, p. 169–70). These authors defend that their brocades with metallic threads were compared with textiles coming from Baghdad and characterized by their motifs, generally symmetrical animals inspired by Byzantine and Sassanian models in medallions or roundels (Partearroyo Lacaba 1992, p. 105–09). The textiles from Baghdad were imitated in such quantities in the looms of Almeria that new regulations were included in the

<sup>2</sup>We use term Andalusī as a synonym of Hispano-Moresque or from al-Andalus; the term Andalusī is different of Andalusian, which refers to Andalusia.

<sup>3</sup>The Andalusī textile production is precisely known for the fabrics that were used with different functions in the Christian territories and that have been preserved in funeral and religious contexts. For example, they can be found in the Royal Pantheon of the monastery of Santa María la Real de Huelgas (Burgos) where is preserved the richest funerary textile trousseau of the Middle Ages (Herrero Carretero 1988; Yarza 2005) and in the churches where fabrics used for liturgical clothing and other purposes, such as wrapping relics, have been preserved (Partearroyo Lacaba 2005; 2007; Rodríguez Peinado 2017b). According to Ibn Ḥawqal, the textiles of al-Andalus were exported to Egypt and could be found up to the Khurasan (see Serjeant 1972, p. 165).

*hisba* (market regulations treatise) on the practice of imitations and falsifications (Mackie 2015, p. 183). These Andalusí textiles created in the manner of Baghdad where known as *bagdadies* or *attabies*, and are characterized by the use of metallic threads, for example in the heads of animals, and by the inscriptions showing characters of the Andalusí script (Rosser-Owen 2010, p. 34; Partearroyo Lacaba 2007, p. 388).

## 11.2 TEXTILE PRODUCTION BETWEEN THE TWELFTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

The fashion for fabrics with the decoration included in large circles was declining in favour of new ornamental repertoires that were imposed during the second half of the twelfth century. First, the size of the roundels was reduced, as can be seen on the covering of the lid of the wooden sarcophagus of Fernando de la Cerda or on the coffin lining of María de Almenar, both at the monastery of Santa María la Real de Huelgas (Burgos) (Herrero Carretero 1988, p. 26–27, 90–91). As for the figurative motifs, although they did not disappear, they were slowly replaced by geometrical and vegetal motifs. The fashion of the fabrics with the decoration in roundels seemed exhausted, but the great demand of the Christian kingdoms for these *palia rotata* led to the imitation of Andalusí silks in Lucca during the thirteenth century, exported to Castile from Genoa and mentioned in the documentation as *Spanish bagadelli* (Jacoby 2004, p. 218, 228–29). These imitations are a sample of the importance of Mediterranean trade and the great productivity of the silks from al-Andalus that promoted the imitations in different workshops.

As we will see, the new patterns and decorative repertoires that were introduced during the second half of the twelfth century are related to the arrival of fabrics from Central Asia through Genoese merchants who monopolized the trade of luxury textiles (Navarro Espinach 2005, p. 96–99). These fabrics influenced the new styles introduced in the production of al-Andalus and in the incipient Italian manufactures, such as Lucca (Jacoby 2016, p. 109), controlled by the Genoese merchants who dominated the Mediterranean textile trade (Jacoby 2017, p. 147).

But in al-Andalus, the new designs have been related to the arrival to power of the Almohad dynasty of Berber origin, who disembarked in the Iberian Peninsula in 1147. In the fourteenth century, Ibn Khaldūn tells

that the first Almohad caliphs refused to wear silk and gold garments obeying the ideal of simplicity of its founder Ibn Tūmart, and they even suspended the position of *ṭirāz* inspector. The caliph Abū Yūsuf Ya‘qūb ordered removal of the silk dresses and forbade the use of sumptuous embroideries to women, ordering the commercialization of the silk and gold clothes stored in the *ṭirāz* (Serjeant 1972, p. 8). This news has been interpreted as a halt in the Andalusī textile production during the second half of the twelfth century, due to the opposition that the caliphs showed for the rich textiles; but the sales of fabrics could have been due to the hatred that the Almohads showed for their predecessors, the Almoravids. Hence, the commercialization of textiles would constitute a manifestation of contempt (Rosser-Owen 2010, p. 45), because the production of rich fabrics did not stop, as can be deduced from the technical and decorative analysis of the textiles classified in the thirteenth century, which shows the continuity of an industry that could not have resurfaced so quickly had it been totally dismantled.

In 1147, Almería was reconquered by Alfonso VII of Castile, coinciding with the decline of the Almoravid Empire, but was taken again in 1157 by the Almohads. The brief Christian occupation would not have implied the decline of the commercial and artisanal activity of the city, because when it was conquered again by Islam, the textile industry was reactivated, which flourished until 1288, when the city passed into the hands of the Nasrids and their looms were ousted by those of Granada. The looms from Almería continued incorporating new techniques and new styles given that the textile production constituted one of its most important sources of wealth.<sup>4</sup> The ideals of simplicity of the Almohad caliphs with respect to rich fabrics could have affected the official production, but did not mean the suppression of a luxury production in the private workshops with a higher degree of professionalization. The majority of the private workshops were probably of small dimensions and specialized in one type of fabric (Goitein 1967, p. 80–81). The textiles manufactured in these workshops continued to be exported because the commercialization of Andalusī fabrics was already consolidated in both the eastern and the western Christian territories. In this sense, we share the idea of Cameron, who proposed the idea of an attachment to the *status quo* in the use of a

<sup>4</sup>This article is focused on the decorative aspects of textiles. For the technical aspects, which are not mentioned for lack of space, the following can be consulted: Saladrigas Cheng (1996); Borrego Díaz (2005).

decorative repertoire regardless of the changes in religion (Cameron 1998, p. 80),<sup>5</sup> and we think that they do not affect political changes either.

The religious rigor of the Almohads has justified the little textile production attributed to the second half of the twelfth century,<sup>6</sup> as well as the change of patterns in the fabrics classified in the first-third of the thirteenth century. Regarding the first issue, manufacturing would not have decreased, since the implementation of a specialized and highly competitive production would not have endured its dismantling and later reactivation after a period of abandonment. It is complicated to think that foreign trade would have disappeared, and with it, all foreign influence. And as for the second matter, it has been argued that the textile repertoire of the thirteenth-century production was inspired by previous Andalusí art motifs as a sign of legitimation (Partearroyo Lacaba 1992, p. 109–10). But although relations can be established with decorative elements of some textile pieces from this period and with Andalusí objects made out of different materials and techniques, the fact is that the ornamental changes could have been due mainly to the change of taste observed in the contemporary textile decoration of the Middle East and Central Asia. Therefore, we can verify that the Andalusí fabrics of the thirteenth century follow the new fashions that were imposed in the Mediterranean basin and spread through commercialization. There is no doubt that in Almería, and other textile centres such as Málaga, Murcia, Granada and Seville, new patterns would be imitated in order to compete with Oriental fabrics, while maintaining their technical uniqueness and adapting the repertoire and colour to their personality. For this reason, although the Iberian fabrics adapt to the new compositional codes, the decorative repertoire still conserved familiar and well-known motifs from the Andalusí art, which were not alien to the models of contemporary textile production. In general, these fabrics are characterized by compositions of diamonds, symmetrical patterns, medallions and alternate bands of varying widths that contain different motifs along with inscriptions with blessings and praises.

The cultural unity of Islam on both sides of the Mediterranean and the continuous trade and diplomatic relations lead us to consider that the ornamental codes of the Andalusí textiles of this period are in perfect harmony with the repertoire of other Islamic manufactures, all influenced by textiles that came from Central Asia. The import marks on some pieces

<sup>5</sup> Religion was the first identity mark in the Middle Ages (Kinoshita 2004, p. 167).

<sup>6</sup> A smaller number of fabrics are conserved from this period.

show the importance of trade. The large blue fabric from the monastery of San Zoilo de Carrión de los Condes (Palencia) decorated with double-headed eagles arranged in rows, has inscriptions on three of its angles marked with ink that appear to be commercial importation marks (Rodríguez Peinado 2017b, p. 196). But more interesting for the thesis that we want to demonstrate is the coffin lining of Alfonso de la Cerda from the Royal Pantheon of the monastery of Santa María la Real de Huelgas (Burgos), where the decoration is distributed in horizontal bands in which geometric elements are alternated with epigraphy, similar in composition but not in colour with the Andalusí textiles of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In this fabric there are several import marks stamped in ink (Herrero Carretero 2004, p. 41, figs. 7–8; Böse 2016, p. 228, fig. 6) and as claimed by Herrero, following the studies of Wardwell, it would be a *panni tartarici*, a name given in the inventories to fabrics from the Transoxiana region characterized by the use of abundant gold threads (Wardwell 1989, p. 100). These rich fabrics arrived in the Mediterranean territories when the *pax mongolica* allowed commercial contacts between the Mongol empire that dominated vast territories of Eurasia, and the Venetian and Genoese merchants. In this intense trade, the Mongols acted as intermediaries with the Far East, which is why this was also the moment of introduction of Chinese influence on motives and compositions, as well as on technical aspects, of the decoration of European textiles (Wardwell 1987, 1989).

These imitations in silk and gold are typical of sophisticated industries that interpreted with creative variations the Central Asian fabrics, which allowed to reduce their demand by obtaining lower price but higher-quality fabrics. In this context, it is reasonable to think that Andalusí manufactures had to adapt to satisfy a clientele among which were the Iberian and European Christian kingdoms. In the peninsular fabrics of the thirteenth century many golden details can be found, perhaps to emulate the splendour of the *panni tartarici* so demanded by kings, nobles and ecclesiastical dignitaries.

In al-Andalus, the new styles were introduced from the mid-twelfth century onwards, responding to market more than for ideological reasons (Feliciano 2014, p. 47). The fabrics from this period are of great quality, with a complex technique in which silk is combined with abundant metal threads, in compositions where the figurative motifs have their size reduced in order to blend in with the rest of the decoration. For this reason, although some textile motifs have been interpreted as an evocation of the

Andalusi art of the previous centuries (Partearroyo Lacaba 2007, p. 395), such as the scrolls of the dalmatic by Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada (monastery of Santa María de Huerta, Soria), which recall the bodies covered with vegetal elements of the caliphal bronzes, it seems rather that this type of dense decorations, with elements of small size contained in geometric or medallions, came from the East, and do not respond to a strictly local phenomenon.

We will cite some examples where these relationships can be observed. The cap of Fernando, son of Alfonso X (Museo de Telas Medievales, monastery of Santa Maria la Real de Huelgas, Burgos) (Yarza 2005, p. 174–75, cat. 20), decorated with animals in regardant positions inside medallions alternated with stars with vegetal motifs, has parallels in contemporary Iranian fabrics, such as a textile at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (inv. T.184-1930) where the motifs, in this case exclusively animals, are inside circular and polygonal medallions (Mackie 2015, p. 147, fig. 4.16).

In the manufactures of the Muslim East, striped or *raqm* fabrics made of bands of varying widths and colour, decorated with varied motifs became fashionable (Saladrigas Cheng 1996, p. 80). Excellent samples of these striped fabrics from the Andalusi workshops can be found in the collection of the monastery of Santa Maria la Real de Huelgas, as the vestments of doña Berenguela, the *pellote* of Leonor of Castile, the cap of the infant Fernando of Castile, the coffin lining of Fernando de la Cerda, the pillow of Leonor of Castile, the pillow of María de Almenar (Herrero Carretero 1988, p. 91–101, 54–55, 60–61, 28–29, 48–49, 92–93, respectively). The shroud of doña Mencía de Lara (monastery of San Andrés del Arroyo, Palencia) and the dalmatic of don Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada (monastery of Santa María de Huerta, Soria) are also decorated with stripes (Yarza 2005, p. 234–35, 194–97, respectively). The pillow of Leonor of Castile, the cap of the infant don Fernando or one of the bands of San Valero's dalmatic (Mackie 2015, p. 192–93) are decorated with interlacing ribbons forming stars and geometric motifs, like the stockings and the alb of King William II of Sicily (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), with a similar chronology in the second half of the twelfth century or the beginning of the thirteenth century (Dolezalek 2016, p. 80–83, figs. 1–2). These decorative schemes are shared with works in other materials, such as the *minbar* of the Kutubiyya Mosque in Marrakech (Badī' Palace Museum, Marrakech), made in Cordoba.

The Eastern influence was maintained during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but the Andalusí fabrics could be distinguished by their contrasting colours—red, blue, yellow, white and green—and by the substitution of metallic threads for yellow silk threads (Partearroyo Lacaba 2005, p. 66). In fact, their compositional schemes are still linked with fabrics of Oriental origin, fundamentally from Mamluk Egypt. In this period, close relations were established between the Nasrids and the Mamluks. Egypt played an important role in spreading culture because it controlled trade between East and West (Rosser-Owen 2010, p. 61). Mamluk objects that facilitated the transmission of typologies, techniques and decoration, arrived to al-Andalus. This transmission has been studied by Hernández Sánchez on metallic objects, to which he attributes a Mamluk origin, with compositions and motifs similar to those of contemporary fabrics (Hernández Sánchez 2017, p. 8).

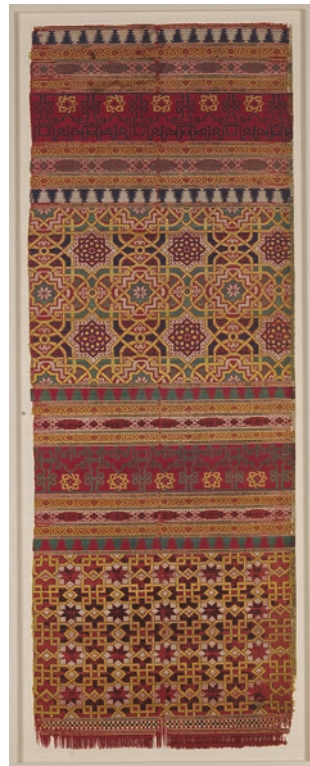
The production of the fourteenth century is configured from the parameters of the previous century. The influence of Central Asian and Mamluk fabrics on vegetal motifs can be observed, as in a fabric of the Museo Lázaro Galdiano in Madrid (inv.1604), decorated with quatrefoils inside roundels and star patterns (López Redondo and Marinetto Sánchez 2012, p. 70–71), that shows similarities with a fabric of Egyptian origin with the inscription *al-Ashraf* of the Victoria and Albert Museum dated at the end of the thirteenth century (inv. 817–1898) (Mackie 2015, p. 256, fig. 7.12), or one from the burial of Rudolf IV preserved at the St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna and dated to the late fourteenth century (Ritter 2016, p. 237, fig. 7). The Central Asian influence is evident in a fabric decorated with undulating asymmetrical palmettes, among which are shields with the motto of the Nasrid dynasty “Glory to our Lord the Sultan” (Museo Lázaro Galdiano, Madrid, inv. 1719) (López Redondo and Marinetto Sánchez 2012, p.68–69). These inscriptions have given these silks a dynastic sense because they could have a political character, considering that many of these fabrics were acquired by a Castilian clientele and the Nasrid kingdom was a vassal of Castile, thus launching a legitimizing message of the Granadine dynasty (see Fig. 11.2, right). This undulating pattern differs little from manufactures on the other side of the Mediterranean, such as an Egyptian damask from the Hermitage Museum of St. Petersburg (inv. EG-905) (Mackie 2015, p. 259, fig. 7.16). The link between contemporary manufactures makes it difficult to classify some fabrics as Andalusí or from the Middle East, like a fragment of Abegg-Stiftung in Riggisberg (inv. 3158) decorated with palmettes in undulating



vertical rhythm (Otavsky and Salim 1995, p. 225, cat. 129), which shows the adequacy of the Iberian workshops to the Oriental decorative trends.

In the fifteenth century, fabrics with bands of varying widths with geometric patterns and star motifs are predominant, as well as interlacings, stylized vegetal motifs and epigraphic inscriptions where the dynastic motto “Glory to our Lord the Sultan” or the words “blessing” and “happiness” are repeated. There are numerous examples of these fabrics, some of great dimensions such as Alhambra hangings (Fig. 11.1) because they would complete the decoration of the rooms of the Nasrid palace complementing the meticulous work developed in the vaults and ceilings, stucco patterns and tile mosaics in a representation of creation and its regenerative process (Ruiz Souza 2017, p. 223–24; Hernández Sánchez 2017, p. 25–31). The cap of the Condestables (Burgos cathedral) (Moreno

**Fig. 11.1** Alhambra hanging, © Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (29.22)



García and Platero Otsoa 2007) also belongs to this group, characterized by its bands of stylized vegetal and epigraphic motifs with the dynastic motto; as well the lined coffin of Prince Felipe of Castile (Museo Lázaro Galdiano, Madrid, inv. 1739) (López Redondo and Marinetto Sánchez 2012, p. 62–63). However, the striped fabrics are not an exclusive creation of the Andalusí production, but an adaptation of the Mongolian and Central Asian fabrics that were exported to Christian Europe, being used in civil (funerary vestments of Rudolf IV, Dommuseum, Vienna) (Ritter 2016) and ecclesiastical vestments, such as the sets of liturgical vestments of the Diözesanmuseum in Regensburg (Von Fircks 2016) or those of the church of St. Mary in Danzig (Borkopp-Restle 2016), although their chromatic and ornamental codes vary.

### 11.3 CHRONOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION

The silk fabrics were fundamental in the trade, and the Andalusí workshops adopted over time the trends coming from the East while maintaining its technical peculiarity, their own elements in the ornamental repertoire and different colour codes. For this reason, it is not always convincing to link them to the succession of dynasties in al-Andalus, especially if political arguments are used to justify a type of decoration. Between the tenth and twelfth centuries, which correspond to the Caliphate, *Tā'ifa* and Almoravid periods, Fatimid, Syrian and Iranian influences can be observed in Andalusí textiles (Partearroyo Lacaba 1997; 2007, p. 376–91), while during the reign of the Almohads (1148–1224) changes can be observed in the designs, in which geometric motifs start to be predominant while figurative ones become reduced in size (Partearroyo Lacaba 1992, p. 110–13; 2007, p. 391–402). But more than linking these changes with the religious rigor of the Almohads, we should relate them to the adaptation of the Andalusí workshops to the new models from Central Asia. As these new models coincided with a historical moment in which the rulers of al-Andalus were looking for ideals of greater austerity, the change of decoration was made to coincide with the tastes imposed by the new dynasty. The last stage of al-Andalus coincides with the Nasrid kingdom (1238–1492) and, in the early days, the textile production did not change from the previous stage. It is only throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that Central Asian and Mamluk influences start to be observed in fabrics: with vegetal motifs first, and with interlacings, stars and inscriptions introduced in the fifteenth century, organized in strips of varying



Fig. 11.2 Nasrid textiles, © Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (18.31)

widths. Also, at this later stage, Castile gives specific commissions to the Andalusí workshops with heraldic motifs (Partearroyo Lacaba 2007, p. 402–08; Mackie 2015, p. 187) (Fig. 11.2).

We defend a chronological classification exempt from political significance to catalog textiles (Feliciano 2014, p. 46), thus avoiding controversial classifications such as, in our opinion, the mantle of the infant Felipe (Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid, and fragments in other museums), which was part of the funeral trousseau of the brother of Alfonso X the Wise, buried in the church of Santa María la Blanca de Villalcázar de Sirga (Palencia) in 1274. The infant participated in a noble revolt of 1272 against his brother and, after his failure, to avoid retaliation, he took refuge in Granada, invited by Muḥammad I. This is where the fabric could come from, decorated with interlacings, star-shaped polygons, quatrefoils, stylized vegetal motifs and topped with epigraphic bands where the inscription “blessing” is repeated (Fig. 11.3). The cap is classified as Nasrid because of the historical context in which it could have been produced (Partearroyo Lacaba 2005, p. 61–62), but its technique—*taquete*—and decoration do not differ from other fabrics classified as Almohads because they were woven when said dynasty reigned in al-Andalus (De los Santos Rodríguez and Suárez Smith 1997).

The separation by reigning dynasties does not result in different fabrics; hence, a chronological classification is more satisfactory. It does not seem necessary to introduce components of dynastic character in fabrics that are similar, technically and decoratively, because precisely the chronology allows verifying of the continuity of trends beyond the political outcomes.



**Fig. 11.3** Mantle of infant don Felipe, © Cooper Hewit Smithsonian Design Museum, New York (1902-1-978)

#### 11.4 CONCLUSION

This contribution intends to provide a new approach in the study of the last centuries of Andalusí textile production, to which, from a historiographical point of view, has been attributed a singularity that is questionable, given that a comparative analysis with fabrics from different manufactures of the Islamic and Eastern world demonstrates that

decorative repertoires continued to reach al-Andalus between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. Silk fabrics acted as mediators in cultural exchange due to their portability and high status. With these objects of great luxury, the styles and motifs crossed cultural borders, as well as the technological innovations that came with them, which resulted in pieces of great sophistication. Hence, the foreign elements were adapted to the tastes and particularities of the production centres, as was the case with the Andalusí workshops of the last medieval centuries.

**Acknowledgments** This paper is part of the activities of the research projects of the Government of Spain “Andalusí textiles fabrics: characterization and interdisciplinary study” (HAR2014-54918-P) and “Al-Andalus, art, science and contexts in an open Mediterranean. From the West to Egypt and Syria” (RTI2018-093880-B-100).

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# Art and Science in al-Andalus and the Late Medieval Mediterranean Cultures: Almohad, Nasrid and Ayyubid Astrolabes in their Context

*Azucena Hernández Pérez*

## 12.1 INTRODUCTION

An exploration of the cross references, the travel back and forth of ideas, innovations and traditions generated at both sides of the Islamic Mediterranean Sea during the Middle Ages is addressed herein, from the double perspective of art and science.<sup>1</sup> The study focuses on the relations

<sup>1</sup>This study is part of the Spanish R&D Project “AL-ACMES: Al-Andalus, arte, ciencia y contextos en un Mediterráneo abierto. De Occidente a Egipto y Siria. (RTI2018-093880-B-I00)”, led by Susana Calvo and Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza. My deepest thanks to them for their support. Images of all the astrolabes mentioned in the text are publicly available in the related museums web sites.

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© The Author(s) 2021  
M. Marcos Cobaleda (ed.), *Artistic and Cultural Dialogues in the Late Medieval Mediterranean*, Mediterranean Perspectives,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53366-3\\_12](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53366-3_12)

between the extant Almohad astrolabes manufactured in Seville, the Nasrid ones made in Granada, and those made in Egypt and Syria under the Ayyubid rule. Attention is also given to the important invention, in al-Andalus, of the Universal Astrolabe, a challenge for the Islamic astronomers since the eighth century, resolved by means of a set of different instruments, all of them designed to be used everywhere, irrespective of the latitude, as desired. Universal instruments, in general, and universal astrolabes in particular are those that aim at providing their functions for all terrestrial latitudes, disassociating the use of the instrument from the geographical position of the user. The universal astrolabes themselves as much as the ideas behind their invention moved through the Mediterranean basin during the Middle Ages, together with other transfers and exchanges of cultural goods. They qualify to be considered a relevant part of the cultural legacy of al-Andalus and exponent of the interaction of this Western Islamic society with both Islamic and non-Islamic medieval societies elsewhere.

## 12.2 APPROACHING THE ASTROLABE AS A CULTURAL GOOD

The commercial and political relationships between al-Andalus, Egypt and the Middle East involved also scientific instruments and, in particular, the astrolabe, a device that combined its functionalities connected to astronomy, geometry and time reckoning with aesthetic features. The interest that political and religious powers took in astrolabes in the Middle Ages and the outstanding patronage of those involved in the manufacturing of these scientific and artistic objects, explain the significant number of them that have survived to the present day, as witnesses to medieval societies.

The successful symbiosis of art and science accomplished by the astrolabes made them play a remarkable transcultural role across the communities living along the shores of the Mediterranean Sea in the late Middle Ages. Consideration of the political, social and technological aspects of the cultures that produced such instruments is essential to understand the role they played beyond their use by astronomers.

The astrolabe is a two-dimensional representation of the celestial sphere. Its initial use was astronomical, namely the simplification of the calculations needed to determine the position and movements of the stars

in the celestial vault. The progressive sophistication of the astrolabe made it serve for other functions, the main ones being: telling time by day and by night and determining heights, depths and horizontal distances.

All the astrolabes have the same structure. The *mater* is the main and thicker piece of the instrument and holds a certain number of *plates* engraved with coordinate lines for different latitudes and then the *rete*, a star map that fits over the *plates* and is free to rotate around its centre. The back of the *mater* carries a circular scale in degrees and various calendar scales. The *alidade* is a straight ruler used for sighting celestial/terrestrial objects in order to determine their altitude over the horizon.<sup>2</sup> The *throne* is the name given to the upper part of the astrolabe to which the ring is attached.

The astrolabe was invented in Hellenistic Greece around the first century BC but the oldest extant astrolabe has all its inscriptions engraved in the Arabic script and it was most possibly made in Baghdad in the eighth century, although it is not dated or signed.<sup>3</sup> The astrolabe's sophistication from this century onwards is Islamic and linked to the extraordinary development of astronomy and mathematics in these societies, combined with the Islamic mastery of the metalwork techniques.

The eleventh century was the golden age of astronomy in al-Andalus with outstanding scientists active in the main Ṭāʾifa (*ṭawāʾif*) Kingdoms, with Toledo above the other ones. In the Eastern Mediterranean, astronomy experienced its moment of grandeur during the Mamluk period (1250–1517), in Cairo in the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries and in Damascus and Aleppo (Syria) in the fourteenth century. The establishment of the figure of the *muwaqqit* in Cairo in the thirteenth century in the most important mosques gave social recognition to those in charge to put astronomy at the service of Islam (King 1996, p. 286–346). The *muwaqqit* was a mosque official, a scholar expert on astronomy and geography, responsible for correctly providing reliable information about the astronomically determined times of prayer, about the regulation of the lunar calendar (especially the month of Ramaḍān) and the determination of the sacred direction towards Mecca, the *qibla* (King 1998, p. 159–61). Various extant documents include the names of *muwaqqits* active in the ʿAmr mosque in Fuṣṭāṭ (Cairo) in the thirteenth century and in the al-Muʾayyad mosque and in the al-Azhar mosque in Cairo in the fifteenth

<sup>2</sup>The various uses of the astrolabe and its structure and layout have been explained by many authors, among them: Hernández Pérez 2018a, p. 25–41; Proctor 2005, p. 15–22; D'Hollander 1999, p. 59–62; North 1974, p. 96–106.

<sup>3</sup>A complete study of this oldest extant astrolabe in King 2005, p. 403–33.

century (King 1983, p. 534). Mosque officials performing the role of *muwaqqit* are documented in al-Andalus nearly simultaneously, in the Nasrid period as Ibn al Khaṭīb (1313–1374) pointed out in his chronicle of Granada *al-Iḥāta fī akhbār Gharnāṭa*. Names of scholars such as Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad ibn Bāšo (d. 1316–1317), theologian, mathematician and astronomer played the function of *raʾīs al-muwaqqiʿīn* (chief of the *muwaqqits*) in the mosque of Granada. His son, the astrolabe maker Aḥmad ibn Ḥusayn ibn Bāšo (d. 1309) was also designated *muwaqqit* attached to the same mosque and Abū-l-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Mūsā ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh al-Laḥmī known as al-Qarabāqī (d. 1440) acted as *muwaqqit* in the mosque of Baza (Rius 2008, p. 263).

### 12.3 UNIVERSAL ASTROLABES: A CHALLENGE FOR ISLAMIC ASTRONOMERS AT BOTH ENDS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Universal instruments, in general, and universal astrolabes in particular are those that aim at providing their functions for all terrestrial latitudes, disassociating the use of the instrument from the geographical position of the user. The search for those universal astrolabes was a challenge for Islamic astronomers who soon realised that adding more *plates* (each *plate*, engraved on both sides, operates in two latitudes), in order to give greater coverage, increased the weight and price of the astrolabe without solving the problem. The first “nearly universal” solution for astrolabes was developed in Baghdad around the year 860. It is attributed to the Abbasid astronomer and mathematician Ḥābash al-Ḥāsib (d. ca. 864) who named his invention *al-ṣafīḥa al-āfāqīyya* (*plate of horizons*).<sup>4</sup> This special *plate* should be allocated in the *mater* of a traditional astrolabe and covered with the *rete*.

Three different universal solutions were developed in al-Andalus, two in Toledo in the eleventh century and the third one in Granada in the thirteenth century (Puig 1992, p. 67–73). The Andalusī universal astrolabes became the major conceptual and technical contribution of al-Andalus to the development of scientific instrumentation. They enjoyed different fortunes when looking at their dissemination throughout the Mediterranean, to the rest of Islam, as much as to occidental Europe.

The first Andalusī universal astrolabe was invented in Toledo in the year 1048 by the astronomer Ibrahīm Ibn Yahyā al-Naqqāsh al-Qurtubī

<sup>4</sup>An overall view of universal (latitude independent) instruments in the Islamic world in King 1987, p. 121–32.

al-Zarqālluh (1029–1100), known as Azarquiel in the Latin sources. He named his invention *saphaea* and developed two variants: the more complex *saphaea zarqāliyya* and its simplified version, the *saphaea shakkāziyya*. Azarquiel abandoned completely the traditional design of the astrolabe settled from the Hellenistic period, eliminating the *rete* and latitude *plates* and reducing the structure of the instrument to a single circular piece engraved on both sides and equipped with a front ruler fitted with a movable perpendicular cursor to set the local latitude.<sup>5</sup> The *saphaea* suffered little acceptance and diffusion in the years following Azarquiel's invention for various possible reasons: it no longer simulated the apparent daily rotation of the heavens, it was difficult to use and there was no way to accommodate decorative features in the complex grid of engraved lines that cover its frontal surface. A small number of *saphaeas* might have been manufactured, according to the few ones that have survived to the present day: four *zarqāliyyas* and three *shakkāziyyas*. Only three out of these seven were made in al-Andalus and all the three are *saphaeas zarqāliyyas*. Two of them were made in Seville during the Almohad period signed by Muḥammad ibn Fattūḥ al-Khamā'irī in 1216 and 1218, and the third one was manufactured in Murcia by Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Hudhayl in 1252 at the start of the Nasrid period.<sup>6</sup>

The writer Ibn al-Qifṭī (Cairo, ca. 1172–1258), active during the Ayyubid period, highlighted the difficulties in spreading the interest on the Azarquiel's *saphaea* outside al-Andalus, due to its complexity. The *saphaea* reached Egypt during the Mamluk period thanks to the astronomer Abū-l-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Marrākushī, active in Cairo in 1280. He was the author of *Jāmi' al-mabādi' wa-l-ghāyāt fī 'ilm al-mīqāt* (Collection of the Principles and Objectives in the Science of Timekeeping), a comprehensive encyclopaedia of practical astronomy, and the single-most important source for the history of astronomical instrumentation in Islam. Al-Marrākushī devoted 130 chapters to explain how to use a *saphaea zarqāliyya* and this extraordinary extension proves its difficulty (Puig 2004). Texts written by scholars in the Maghreb (fourteenth century), Syria (fourteenth century), Samarkand in Central Asia (fifteenth century) and up to Delhi in India (seventeenth century) refer to the *saphaea*

<sup>5</sup>A good number of published papers deal with the Azarquiel *saphaeas*, focusing on the kind of projection they bear, their characteristics and uses. To be highlighted: Puig 1987; Samsó 2011, p. 180–99 y 488–90; Michel 1947, p. 93–102; Millás Vallicrosa 1943.

<sup>6</sup>Full description of the *saphaea* signed by ibn Hudayl in Puig 2003, p. 357–65 and Millás Vallicrosa 1944, p. 111–19.

demonstrating that the instrument invented in Toledo in the eleventh century eventually reached the extreme Eastern Islamic territory.

Contemporary to the *saphaea* and also invented in Toledo in the eleventh century was the *Universal Plate* by Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Khalaf ibn Aḥmar al-Ṣaydalānī. Despite the correct mathematical and astronomical structure of this universal solution, it should have not attracted much interest among the instrument makers and their patrons because not a single unit has survived to the present day.<sup>7</sup> It consists of a *rete* divided horizontally into two semi-circles, the upper one with a set of *shakkāziyya* markings, and the lower one with the traditional star pointers, subject to the inclusion of decorative and complex shapes. Under the *rete*, a *plate* bearing the *shakkāziyya* curves for latitude zero (Calvo y Puig 2006). All these structural details are known thanks to the translation into Spanish of the Treatise in Arabic language containing the description of this instrument made in the *scriptorium* of the king Alfonso X of Castile and included in his *magnus opus* “*Libro del Saber de Astrologia*” (Book of Knowledge of Astrology) finished in 1278. Despite its limited diffusion, the characteristics of the Ibn Khalaf *Universal Plate* were used in the design of the universal astrolabe signed by the Syrian astronomer of the fourteenth century Ibn al-Sarrāj to be presented later. The treatise on astronomical instruments written by Najm al-Dīn al-Miṣrī (active in Cairo and Aleppo in ca. 1325–1340), includes both the *saphaea* and the *universal plate* and therefore confirms that they were known in Cairo as physical objects and not only as texts descriptions, in the first quarter of the fourteenth century (Charette 2003, p. 92–111).

A third universal instrument saw the light of day in al-Andalus, invented by the astronomer and mathematician Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad ibn Bāṣo (d. 1316–1317) author of the *Risālat al-safīha al-jāmiā li-jāmi al-urūd* (Treatise on the General Plate for all Latitudes) finished in 1274 (Calvo 1993). The *General Plate* should be allocated within a traditional astrolabe, under its *rete* and working as the well-known latitude *plates* but serving all latitudes in a less intuitive way.

The *General Plate* by Ibn Bāṣo can be considered a kind of synthesis of the two universal instruments invented in al-Andalus in the eleventh

<sup>7</sup>Two extant instruments reveal some similarities to the invention by ibn Khalaf. One dated 1327–1328 is kept in the Museum of History of Science in Oxford (see Puig 2004, p. 81) and the other one dated in the sixteenth century is in the Museum of Science and Technology in Madrid (see Moreno et al. 2002, p. 331–62).

century, the *saphaea* of Ibn al-Zarqālluh and the *Universal Plate* of ‘Alī ibn Khalaf together with the already mentioned *Plate of Horizons* of the Persian astronomer Ḥābāsh al-Ḥāsib (ca. 864). Ibn Bāṣo states in the prologue of his treatise that his invention is different from these former ones, so as not to cause confusion, and declares that his *General Plate* has a more accurate design, allowing an easier performance than the previous ones (Calvo 1996, p. 757). Ibn Bāṣo’s own son, the already mentioned astrolabe maker Abū ʿĀfar Aḥmad ibn Ḥusayn ibn Bāṣo, incorporated the invention of his father into two of the three extant astrolabes signed by him. A total of twenty-three astrolabes that incorporate Ibn Bāṣo’s *General Plate*, among their set of *plates*, have survived to the present day: four of them made in al-Andalus and the rest in other parts of Islam, from Northern Africa to India, between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries.

The *Treatise on the General Plate for all Latitudes* by Ibn Bāṣo became known in Egypt and the Middle East in the first half of the fourteenth century, during the Mamluk Sultanate, an early date considering that Ibn Bāṣo completed his treatise in 1275. The Egyptian astronomer Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Mizzī, who was *muwaqqit* of the Damascus Mosque, made a *General Plate* in 1334 that is presently one of the *plates* in the astrolabe signed in 1309 by Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī in Tunisia presently in the Whipple Museum of History of Science in Cambridge (Calvo 1993, p. 27).

This interest in universal astrolabes throughout Islam, together with the dissemination of those found in al-Andalus, led to the design of a new solution in the Eastern Mediterranean area. The Syrian astrolabe maker Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Abī Bakr, known as Ibn al-Sarrāj made, in Aleppo, what he called *al-asturlāb al-mugni* (the astrolabe without *plates*) in 1328 for Muḥammad al-Tanūjī, member of a distinguished Syrian family.<sup>8</sup> David King considers this unique astrolabe as the most sophisticated extant astronomical instrument of those built before the year 1600 and combines the best of the three universal solutions invented in al-Andalus (King 2005, p. 694–700). Its *rete* is similar in design to the *Universal Plate* of Ibn Khalaf, although there is no evidence that he knew it, with a grid of coordinates in the upper semi-circle and star pointers in the lower

<sup>8</sup>The astrolabe by Ibn al-Sarrāj is conserved in the Benaki Museum of Islamic Art (Athens, acc. nr. 13,178). An image of this astrolabe can be seen at the Benaki Museum of Islamic Art website ([https://www.benaki.org/index.php?option=com\\_collectionitems&view=collectionitem&id=117343&Itemid=162&lang=en](https://www.benaki.org/index.php?option=com_collectionitems&view=collectionitem&id=117343&Itemid=162&lang=en))

one.<sup>9</sup> Underneath, it bears a *plate* with a projection consisting of a set of engraved curves identical to those in the *saphaea shakkaziyya* of Azarquiel. The shapes of the star pointers are basic arrowheads similar to those found in the *retes* of the earliest Abbasid astrolabes made in the ninth and tenth centuries. Two decorative elements, one heart-shaped and the other arch-shaped, lie along the meridian axis. The triangular *throne* bears elegant double palmettes and interlaced circles contributing to the value of the astrolabe as an aesthetic object beyond its scientific one. This astrolabe of Ibn al-Sarrāj was in the hands of the Egyptian astronomer ‘Izz al-Dīn al-Wafā’ in the middle of the fifteenth century, who took advantage of this circumstance to write in Cairo a treatise describing the instrument and its uses that fortunately has survived to the present day. In the opinion of François Charette, the astrolabe of Ibn al-Sarrāj is the perfect example of an astrolabe that, despite its mathematical sophistication, may have not been used at all and probably it just played the relevant role of materializing abstractions and mathematical rules, becoming an intellectual incentive for scholars and advanced students (Charette 2006, p. 131).

#### 12.4 ASTROLABES AS AESTHETIC-SCIENTIFIC OBJECTS IN EASTERN AND WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN

The aesthetic elements that were soon included in the design of astrolabes turned them into sumptuous objects, beyond their interest as scientific instruments with various uses. The political and religious elites took a continuous interest in astrolabes during the Middle Ages ensuring the aristocratic patronage of the astrolabe makers. Astrolabes became symbol of status, of erudition and even of power, as an image of the Universe.

The earliest extant astrolabes were made in the eighth and ninth centuries in Baghdad under the Abbasid rule. Leaving aside their geometrical and astronomical structural elements and focusing only on the decorative elements present in their *rete* and *throne*, these early Abbasid astrolabes bear very simple star pointers in the shape of arrowheads and no additional decorative elements. This austerity in the design of the *retes* is also evident in the first astrolabes made in al-Andalus by the end of the tenth century. This initial lack of decoration may be due to the reduced interest in aesthetics of those interested in astrolabes at that time: the limited community of astronomers and mathematicians.

<sup>9</sup>The stars indicated in the star pointers of this *rete* in Stautz 1997, p. 68, 213.



The interest in including decoration in some parts of the astrolabe began in the tenth century and the change took place in the Eastern Mediterranean, in Baghdad, the city that enjoyed political power, scientist knowledge and artistic creativity and skills, at that time. The best example is the astrolabe signed in Baghdad by Hamid al-Jidr al-Khujandī in the year 984, presently in the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha (Qatar).<sup>10</sup> Its *rete* and *throne* are masterpieces crafted by the hands of an anonymous highly skilled metalworker. The *throne* bears two lion faces inside circular frames placed symmetrically. The star pointers of the *rete* feature different geometric, zoomorphic and phytomorphic shapes: from the basic arrow-heads to bird heads with their picks and palmettes. Additional decorative elements include a quatrefoil, an inverted heart-shaped frame, a kind of “smiling” circle and an M-shaped frame. A good number of these ornaments can be found in sumptuous objects of the Islamic art, namely metalwork pieces, ceramics and textiles.

The Islamic countries of the Eastern Mediterranean dared to incorporate imaginative and diverse decorative elements to the astrolabes, in opposition to the more austere policy followed in Western Islam, namely in al-Andalus and North Africa. However, the aesthetic intention becomes evident in all cases, as a proof of the virtuosity in the metalworking craft, in particular in brass, the alloy of which the medieval astrolabes were made.

Three outstanding astrolabes are herein analysed from the aesthetic viewpoint: one made in Syria (Eastern Mediterranean) in the thirteenth century during the Ayyubid period and two made in al-Andalus (Western Mediterranean): one manufactured in Seville in the twelfth during the Almohad period and the other one in Granada in the thirteenth century, during the Nasrid period. The study concentrates in the decorative elements present in their *retes* and *thrones*, despite the Ayyubid one displays decoration on its back as well, which is not subject to consideration in this occasion.

An interesting production of astrolabes took place during the years 1171–1250 when the Ayyubid dynasty, founded by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (r. 1169–1193), ruled Egypt and Syria. The astrolabe signed by ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Miṣrī in 1235–1236 can be considered the most decorative one of those made in the Middle Ages not only for the figural designs of its star pointers, but also for the attractive use of the fashionable technique of inlaying

<sup>10</sup>A complete study of this astrolabe in King 2005, p. 503–17.

silver and copper in its brass main structure.<sup>11</sup> The star pointers of its *rete* features zoomorphic naturalistic and detailed patterns (i.e. fish, horse, elephant, snake), phytomorphic ones (i.e. bushes, flowers) and geometric frames (i.e. circle, quatrefoil). It features a very uncommon anthropomorphic star pointer as a female dancing figure. The full *rete* shines in a polychrome atmosphere created by the combination of white silver and red copper inlaid in golden brass, an exceptional aesthetic experience out of the monochrome astrolabe production. The *throne* of the ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Miṣrī astrolabe contributes to its celebrity by using the silver inlaid in brass technique (named *takfīt* in Arabic) to feature phytomorphic and geometrical patterns symmetrically placed in the triangular-shaped element.

Moving now from the Eastern to the Western Mediterranean, we face the production of astrolabes in al-Andalus that began in Cordoba in the tenth century, remaining active until the fall of Granada in 1492. As already indicated, the austerity in their decorations was a sign of identity although the interest to endowing the astrolabes with aesthetic features becomes evident since the second half of the eleventh century. Leaving aside the relevant production of astrolabes during the Golden Age of the Andalusī science that occurred during the Ṭā’ifa period, already mentioned, the focus directs now towards the astrolabe manufacturing in the Almohad and Nasrid periods.

The manufacturing of astrolabes flourished under the Almohad rule in the city of Seville thanks to the relevant figure of Muḥammad ibn Fattūḥ al-Khamā’irī. A total of twelve astrolabes and two *saphaeas*, signed by him and dated between 1212 and 1237 are extant. The astrolabe *retes* by al-Khamā’irī are easy to identify, all bearing filiform elegant star pointers with small spheres of silver decorating their bases.<sup>12</sup> They also display a circle surrounding the pointer of Sirius, the brightest star in the sky, known since ancient times and named in the Qur’ān since Allāh is considered “Lord of Sirius” (Sūra 53, verse 49th entitled “The Star”). The evident symmetry enjoyed by al-Khamā’irī’s Almohad *retes* and their stylized and refined design opposes, by some means, to the sumptuous and somehow

<sup>11</sup> A short description of this astrolabe in Gunther 1976, p. 236–37. The stars indicated in the star pointers of its *rete* in Stautz 1997, p. 68, 210. On the debates regarding its authorship inscription, see Ward 2004, p. 345–58.

<sup>12</sup> A detailed study of this astrolabe made by al-Khamā’irī in Seville in Hernández Pérez 2018b, p. 163–69.

excessive variety of ornamental elements in the al-Miṣrī Ayyubid ones whose use is, somehow, jeopardized by the exuberant decoration.

By the end of the thirteenth century in the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada, the astrolabe maker Aḥmad ibn Ḥusayn ibn Bāšo (d. 1309), already mentioned as *muwaqqit* of the Granada mosque, chose a more decorative design for his *retes*, yet austere but nicely symmetric. They bear star pointers with the shape of double palmettes, a sign of identity of the Andalusí decorative repertoire.

The Andalusí historian Ibn al-Khaṭīb (1313–1374) indicates in his *al-Iḥāta fī aḡbār Gharnāṭa* about the history of Granada, that Aḥmad ibn Ḥusayn ibn Bāšo was an astrolabe maker from *Sharq al-Andalus* (East of the Iberian Peninsula, by the Mediterranean Sea), who moved to Granada with his father. According to the same source, he became famous for his skill in the manufacturing of astronomical instruments and managed to get his astrolabes, higher in price than those of other reputed authors such as Muḥammad ibn Fattūh al-Khamā'irī of Seville (thirteenth century) or Ibn al Ṣaffār (eleventh century) active in Cordoba and Toledo. Three astrolabes signed by Ibn Bāšo in Granada have survived to the present day, two of them holding the *General Plate for all Latitudes*, invented by his father, in addition to various traditional latitude *plates*, and with double palmettes as sign of identity of their *retes*, as shown in the one made in Granada in 1304–1305.<sup>13</sup>

## 12.5 CONCLUSION

Astrolabes moved along the Mediterranean area in the hands of scholars, merchants and travellers. They all responded to a common general structure, demonstrating the success of a design that lasted since their invention in the first centuries of our Era until the nineteenth century. Notwithstanding their common basic design, the ornamental and aesthetic features of the medieval astrolabes at both ends of the Mediterranean Sea are different. The interest in adding beauty and variety of shapes to the fixed basic structure of the astrolabe pieces is evident, and the craftsmen involved in the actual manufacturing of the pieces showed their own style. The *rete* and the *throne* of the astrolabes gave room for the artistic genius that had to be deployed without jeopardizing the various uses of the

<sup>13</sup>A detailed study of this astrolabe made by al-Khamā'irī in Seville in Hernández Pérez 2018b, p. 219–26.

instrument of which they were part. The Eastern Mediterranean territories were the absolute winners on sophistication and creativity in the design of the star pointers of the *retes*, while the elegance based on symmetry and simplicity was more common in al-Andalus and North Africa.

The diffusion of scientific and technical novelties such as those of the universal astrolabes took quite a while and these innovative instruments never replaced the well-known and easy to use traditional astrolabes dependent on latitude. While the concepts behind the three universal solutions invented in al-Andalus were brilliant, the medieval promoters and supporters of the astrolabe manufacture in the Mediterranean area did not appreciate it due to the difficulties in their use. Only the *General Plate* by Ibn Bāšo escaped somehow from the practical irrelevance of these innovations within the Islamic societies.

A different case arose in the European medieval kingdoms. The *saphaea* of Azarquiel was known in the thirteenth century by means of the translations to Latin and Hebrew made by Proffeit Tibbon and also to Spanish by the members of the *scriptorium* commissioned by King Alfonso X of Castile. Later on, in the sixteenth century, the *saphaea* of Azarquiel was appreciated and somehow improved, to the extent that it materialised in the backside of a good number of astrolabes, thanks to the treatises by Regier Gemma Frisius (Louvain, 1508–1554) and his disciple, the Spanish astronomer Juan de Rojas (Puig 2004, p. 80–81). A good example is the astrolabe signed by Gualterius Arsenius in Louvain in 1566 now in the Archaeological Museum in Madrid (acc.nr. 52,069).

Traditional and universal astrolabes were tools for the astronomers of the Middle Ages with a multiplicity of uses but they were also “icons of the visions of the Heavens” and “mirrors of the Universe” in the words of David A. King, for the societies that flourished in the shores of the Mediterranean Sea during the Middle Ages.

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PART V

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Final Remarks



## Final Remarks: *ArtMedGIS* Project: Artistic Exchanges between East and West in the Late Medieval Mediterranean

*María Marcos Cobaleda*

The aim of these final remarks is to present the results of the European Project *Analysis of the Artistic Exchanges in the Medieval Mediterranean between Twelfth and Fifteenth Centuries through the Geographical Information Systems (GIS): A Critical Review of “Centre” and “Peripheries”* (*ArtMedGIS* Project, MSCA – H2020, Grant Agreement n° 699,818), the framework in which this publication is included. The main goal of this project was to assess the artistic exchanges between various societies and territories in the late medieval Mediterranean (between twelfth and fifteenth centuries) through the application of the Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and the HBDS methodology.

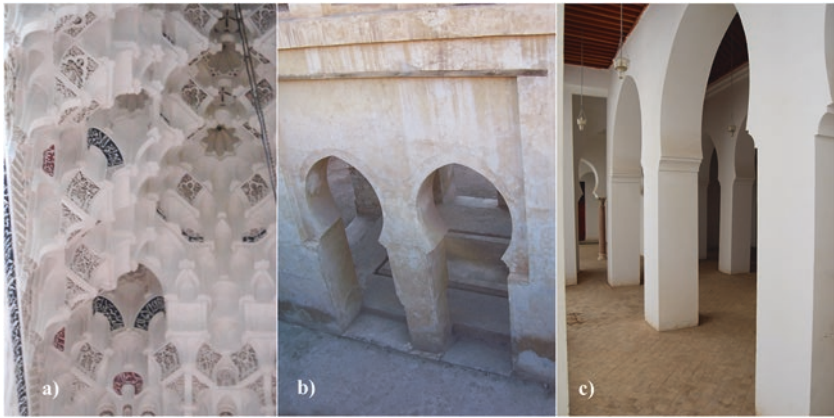
The starting point for this exploration has been the selection of innovative artistic elements developed by the Almoravids during the twelfth century and which can be related to other manifestations produced by other Mediterranean societies (Islamic and non-Islamic ones) due to existing

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M. Marcos Cobaleda (ed.), *Artistic and Cultural Dialogues in the Late Medieval Mediterranean*, Mediterranean Perspectives,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53366-3\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53366-3_13)





**Fig. 13.1** (a) Detail of the *muqarnaş* vault in the axial nave of al-Qarawiyyīn Mosque, Fez (1136–1137). Courtesy of Mounir Akasbi. (b) Pointed-horseshoe arches of the Qubbat al-Bārūdiyyīn, Marrakech (1125). (c) *Masjid al-Janā'iz* of al-Qarawiyyīn Mosque, Fez (1135). Courtesy of Mounir Akasbi

commercial, political and cultural relations. Within this context, the selection has been based on architectural and decorative elements that the Almoravids incorporated into Western Islamic art (as is the case of the pointed-horseshoe arches), or were highly developed by them (as the *muqarnaş*). Three specific elements (the *muqarnaş*, the pointed-horseshoe arches and the *Masājid al-Janā'iz*, known also as the “Mosques of the dead” (Terrasse 1968, p. 6) or the preferred denomination “oratory for funerals” (Leonetti 2014, p. 204)), have been chosen to be analysed due to their great ulterior impact in Western Islamic and non-Islamic art (Marcos Cobaleda and Piro 2016, p. 12–13) (Fig. 13.1). During the project, their spread throughout the Mediterranean basin in the aforementioned temporal framework has been studied, thanks to the application of the GIS and the creation of three databases with the QGIS program (one per each preselected element).

Within this context, four specific objectives were established for the project:

1. To measure the presence of the pre-selected elements in the main artistic manifestations of the Islamic and Christian Mediterranean countries in the late Middle Ages.

2. To apply a new method based on the GIS, through the creation of three databases for studying exchanges between the main Mediterranean artistic manifestations and Almoravid art.
3. To assess the relation of religion and power with the artistic productions of the Islamic countries in the Mediterranean framework.
4. To review the concepts of centre and peripheries regarding the artistic production in the Mediterranean context (Marcos Cobaleda 2019, p. 83).

Development of the databases of the *muqarnas*, the pointed-horseshoe arches and the *Masājid al-Janā'iz* came about with the use of information from written sources, archaeological remains, field visits, museum and archives collections and historiography. Thanks to these varied sources, the different ensembles of *muqarnas* and pointed-horseshoe arches, as were spread throughout various buildings between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, have been included. These ensembles have been documented in a range of building types and catalogued in the databases using the following fourteen categories: mosques; *madrasas*; walls; fortresses; churches/monasteries/chapels; palaces/domestic architecture; shrines/tombs/cemeteries; *māristān* (hospitals); fountains/*ḥammām*; *funduq*/caravanserai; *janqa/zawiya/ribāṭ* (institutions for mystical Muslim orders); synagogues; *sūq* (markets); and shipyards (Marcos Cobaleda 2019, p. 85, Fig. 2). For the case of the *Masājid al-Janā'iz*, the examples documented in the Mediterranean basin of this specific type of building, as appeared between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, have been included in the database.

Concerning the different empires of the late medieval Mediterranean whose artistic manifestations have been compared throughout the presence of the three preselected elements, the following ones – most of them mentioned before by different authors throughout this publication – have been studied: Almoravids and Almohads (in North Africa and al-Andalus); Christian Kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula; Ibn Mardānīsh and Nasrids (in al-Andalus); Merinids and Ḥammādis (in the Maghreb); Zayyanids (in Tlemcen); Hafṣids (in Ifrīqiya); Normans (in Sicily); Fatimids, Zenghids, Ayyubids and Mamluks (in Egypt and Bilād al-Shām); and Seljuqs and Ottomans (in Anatolia and East Europe) (Marcos Cobaleda 2019, p. 85, Fig. 2).

For assessment of the relation of religion with these various artistic productions, the different credos (Islamic, Christian and Jewish) have

been included in the databases. In this case, the Sunnī and Shīʿī Islam have been differentiated, because variations in the use of specific artistic elements have been observed during the compilation of data.

From the implementation of the three databases, a corpus of cartographical materials concerning each database was created in the framework of the *ArtMedGIS* Project using the QGIS program. Thanks to these cartographical materials, the analysis of complex phenomena – beyond the geographical aspects and directly linked to the objectives 3 and 4 – has been possible. The post-processing of the data with the GIS has allowed, in a first place, to establish common points between Islamic culture and other medieval Mediterranean societies, above all in the case of Mudéjar and Sicilian artistic manifestations; in a second place, to value the importance of the relation of power and religion with the artistic productions in medieval societies (objective 3), including the influence of different credos in the same religion, as the aforementioned Sunnī and Shīʿī Islam (a pre-eminence of two of the studied artistic elements in Sunnī societies in comparison with the Shīʿī ones have been documented); and, in a third place, to question the traditional concepts of centre and peripheries concerning the Islamic artistic productions and creation of motifs and their spread (objective 4).

An example of this last question can be seen in the different cartographical materials related to the *muqarnas*. This artistic element was created in Orient in late ninth century or early tenth, probably in Iraq, as Yasser Tabbaa proposes (Tabbaa 1985, p. 62; 2001, p. 104). Despite its use in oriental lands since that date (including its presence in *muqarnas* domes), concerning the Mediterranean context, the use of *muqarnas* was delayed until the eleventh century, while the most ancient examples of *muqarnas* domes date back to the early twelfth century (and thus are situated in those territories under the Almoravid influence<sup>1</sup> (Marcos Cobaleda and Pirot 2016, p. 20–23). After the outstanding Almoravid examples of *muqarnas* domes – such as those capping the al-Qarawiyyīn Mosque of Fez – were built in the decade of 1130s (Marcos Cobaleda 2015, 178–79),

<sup>1</sup>Although the most ancient documented *muqarnas* in the Western Mediterranean are those from the Qalʿa of the Banū Ḥammād (Golvin 1965, p. 127), their traditional chronological adscription has been revised by A. Carrillo Calderero. She proposes that the *muqarnas* of the Qalʿa were fruit of the reforms carried out by Prince al-Manṣūr in this location starting in 1090 and extending into the early twelfth century (Carrillo Calderero 2009, p. 26), in a moment when the political and trade relations between the Ḥammādis of the Qalʿa and the Almoravids are well-known (Marcos Cobaleda and Pirot 2016, p. 16).

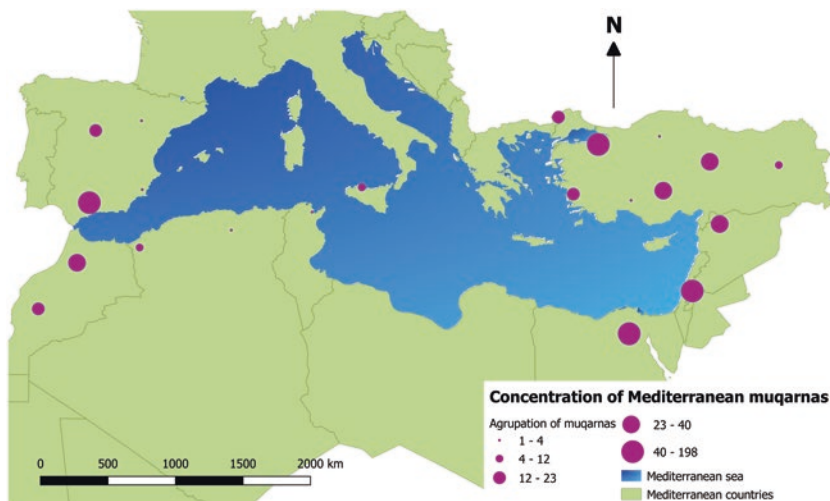


Fig. 13.2 Geographical concentration of Mediterranean *muqarnas* between twelfth and fifteenth centuries (QGIS), María MARCOS COBALEDA

this artistic element was widely spread throughout the Mediterranean basin in the ensuing centuries; for this reason, it has been included in our *muqarnas* database (and available to be analysed, thanks to the cartographical materials elaborated via the QGIS program).

From an examination of these materials, with the simple representation in the map of the almost 800 ensembles of *muqarnas* located in more than 300 buildings we have documented in the Mediterranean framework between twelfth and fifteenth centuries, it is possible to advertise two well-distinguished geographical areas: the Eastern and the Western Mediterranean, with only some examples in the central area (Fig. 13.2). The few examples located in the central part are distributed in the following way: 8 ensembles in Sicily (built in the twelfth century under Norman rule); 1 ensemble in Tunisia (built in the thirteenth century under Almohad rule) and 5 in Macedonia (built under early Ottoman rule, in the late fifteenth century) (Redžić 1976, p. 305). Taking into account that the most ancient Fatimid *muqarnas* were contemporary with those of the Qal'a of the Banū Ḥammād and the Almoravid structures – and the fact that the *muqarnas* of the Mosque of the Qašba in Tunis were built under the Almohad rule (Zbiss 1971, p. 13) – it is hard to think that this artistic

element arrived in the Western Mediterranean from such places, as had been proposed in the traditional historiography (Marçais 1957, p. 144). Within this scenario, if we consider as well that the *muqarnaş* vault seems to be unknown in Fatimid architecture<sup>2</sup> – despite the outstanding examples developed by the Almoravids in al-Qarawiyyīn Mosque of Fez in the first half of the twelfth century – the traditional explanations of the spread of *muqarnaş* from the East to the West are not altogether satisfactory. For this reason, it is necessary to review the ancient concepts of centre and peripheries and reframe the possibility of the existence of several production centres located in distant places for the particular case of the creation of *muqarnaş* in the Mediterranean framework. In this sense, and especially when, after a stylistic exam, numerous differences between Oriental and Occidental *muqarnaş* can be established (Pereira 1994, p. 253), it is possible to raise the hypothesis of the existence of a Western production centre of *muqarnaş*, located in the Qal‘a of the Banū Ḥammād or in the Almoravid territories. In this context, this last dynasty can be considered responsible for their spread throughout the Western territories of al-Andalus, the Maghreb and Sicily<sup>3</sup> during the twelfth century.

Related to the religious sphere, thanks to the analysis of the cartographical material of *muqarnaş*, we have observed that the credo is a very significant point to take into account in the election of specific elements with symbolic values. After the analysis of the obtained results, it is possible to certify that the element of the *muqarnaş* was mostly employed by the Sunnī Mediterranean societies than others: we have documented 641 ensembles of *muqarnaş* distributed among 260 different buildings, built by Sunnī societies, while in the case of the Shī‘ī societies, we have only documented 42 ensembles of *muqarnaş* distributed among 17 different buildings. On the other hand, in the case of Christian constructions, we have documented 86 ensembles of *muqarnaş* in 32 different buildings, and in the case of Jewish constructions, there are only 2 ensembles of *muqarnaş* in both different synagogues: the Synagogue of El Tránsito in Toledo and the Synagogue of Cordoba. The clear relation between the employment of *muqarnaş* and the Sunnī Mediterranean societies can be

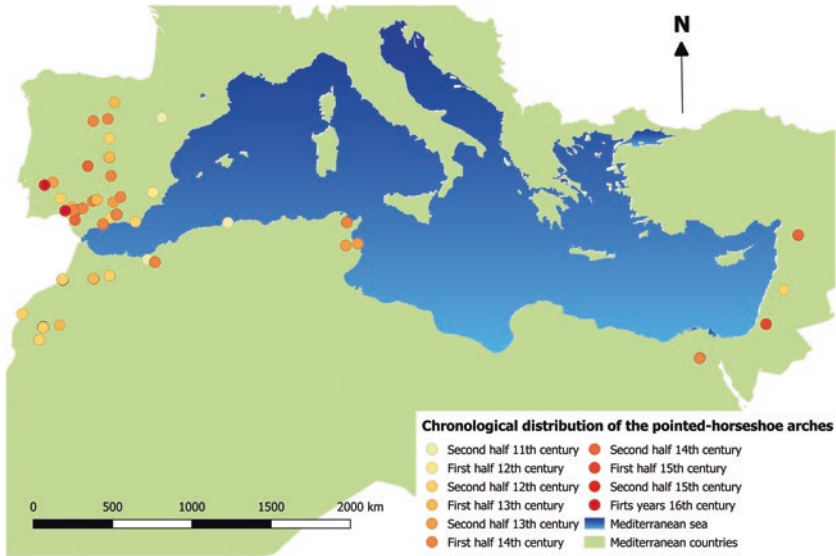
<sup>2</sup>According to J. Bloom, the *muqarnaş* vault in Egypt seems not to have been used until the middle of the fourteenth century, while it had been employed in North Africa and Sicily since the twelfth century (Bloom 1988, p. 21).

<sup>3</sup>For more details about the Almoravid influence in the Sicilian *muqarnaş*, see Marcos Cobaleda and Pirot 2016, p. 23–24, 30.

explained throughout the interpretation of the *muqarnas* domes that Yasser Tabbaa (Tabbaa 1985, p. 69–72; 2001, p. 132–33); and Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza (Ruiz Souza 2000, p. 10) have proposed. For both authors, the construction of the *muqarnas* domes is deeply influenced by the doctrine of Occasionalism, born at the end of the tenth century or early eleventh in Iraq, within the pale of the Abbasid Caliphate (Tabbaa 2001, p. 132). This theory explains how the Universe is divided in different atoms that combine themselves in an accidental way to create different entities and beings, whose variety is determined by God’s will (Ruiz Souza 2000, p. 10). According to this theory, as Yasser Tabbaa defines, the *muqarnas* dome is a clear materialisation of the principles of Occasionalism, where the whole surface of the dome is divided in different cells whose aspect changes thanks to the effect of light (Tabbaa 1985, p. 71–72).<sup>4</sup> Due to the submission of the Almoravid emirs to the Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad as a way of legitimation (De Felipe 2014, p. 57), the theories of Occasionalism were adopted in the Western Mediterranean, as employment of the *muqarnas* was emerging, being both – theory and practice – spread throughout the Mediterranean basin during the following centuries. Linked to this idea of legitimation, the *muqarnas* vaults and domes also became symbols of the Almoravid emirs’ political supremacy against the Almohads (Marcos Cobaleda and Pirot 2016, p. 29). Beyond their religious and cosmological interpretation, these ideas of supremacy and power, as linked to the *muqarnas* could be related to their use by Christians and Jews.

Concerning the second preselected element studied within the framework of the *ArtMedGIS* Project (the pointed-horseshoe arches), due to the huge number of cases of study and the temporary restrictions of the project, implementation of the database has not been completed. Nevertheless, the sample implemented for the moment is sufficiently representative to do a first analysis of the distribution of this artistic element, which allows the raising of preliminary hypothesis. In this case, if we observe the geographical distribution of the pointed-horseshoe arches in the Mediterranean basin, there is a clear concentration in the West, with only a few examples in the East – built, in most cases, relatively late in the history under consideration (from the fourteenth century) and, in the remainder of cases, always later than the most ancient ensembles of the

<sup>4</sup>For a detailed explanation of the relation between the *muqarnas* and the Occasionalism, see Marcos Cobaleda and Pirot 2016, p. 28–29.



**Fig. 13.3** Chronological distribution of pointed-horseshoe arches between twelfth and fifteenth centuries (QGIS), María MARCOS COBALEDA

Western territories (from the second half of the twelfth century), as it can be seen in the map of the chronological distribution of this element (Fig. 13.3).

This fact has salience in considering, yet again, the previous concepts of centre and peripheries. If we take into account the assessments of the traditional historiography, this type of arch is quite directly influenced by Oriental architecture (Pijoán 1949, p. 49; Hoag 1975, p. 55; Revault 1988, p. 316). Nevertheless, the most ancient example of pointed-horseshoe arches documented within the framework of the project in the Eastern Mediterranean has been the case of the arches of the Māristān of Nūr al-Dīn, built in Damascus in 1154 (Carrillo Calderero 2009, p. 332) – at a point when this type of arch had been fully established in the Western Mediterranean for more than a half century. For this reason, from the analysis developed during the *ArtMedGIS* Project, the creation of this specific architectural element can be attributed to Western Islamic architecture, as opposed to emanating from the Oriental tradition. In this context, the most ancient pointed-horseshoe arches documented are those

located in the mosques of the times of the Almoravid emir Yūsuf Ibn Tāshufīn, built at the end of the eleventh century in Tlemcen, Nedroma and Algiers (Algeria) (Marcos Cobaleda 2018, p. 323), the pointed-horseshoe arches of the ancient Bāb Bujlūd in Fez, built as well at the end of the eleventh century by the emir Yūsuf Ibn Tāshufīn (Marcos Cobaleda 2015, p. 171) and a sole example that has been documented at the Aljafería of Saragossa, hearken also from the end of the eleventh century. According to these results, the existence of a production centre of this artistic element in the Almoravid territories since the end of the eleventh century can be proposed, following the idea already announced by Agustin Berque when he described the *minbar* of the Great Mosque of Algiers:

cette forme n'est pas spécifiquement orientale; elle est devenue comme la signature de l'architecture maghrébine et andalouse. (Berque 1930, p. 63)

On the other hand, thanks to the cartographical material, we could determine in a preliminary way the types of buildings where the pointed-horseshoe arches can be found (Fig. 13.4). In this case, the largest number of examples corresponds to the religious architecture (51 ensembles of a total of 100 buildings, distributed among mosques, *madrasas* and churches/monasteries/chapels), followed by the military one (24 ensembles of a total of 100 buildings, distributed between walls and fortresses). With the future implementation of the geodatabase, according to the compiled data, the number of religious structures where we can find this element is going to be significantly increased (above all, due to its use in Mudéjar religious architecture); therefore, the proportion will be higher than the current one. This fact is significant as well because, traditionally, the use of the pointed-horseshoe arches had been associated with military architecture. Thanks to the analysis of the cartographical materials elaborated during the *ArtMedGIS Project*, a reliable starting point for future studies to review the traditional point of view of the association of certain elements to a determine type of constructions have been established.

The last element we have studied in the Project is the *Masājid al-Janā'iz*. The number of this kind of mosque, as documented within the Mediterranean framework, is significantly lower than the other two elements under consideration. The most ancient *Masājid al-Janā'iz* were those built under Almoravid rule, in times of the emir 'Alī Ibn Yūsuf. Their construction seems to be related to some fatwas from Ibn Rushd al-Jadd, *qāḍī* of Cordoba at that moment, and al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, about the



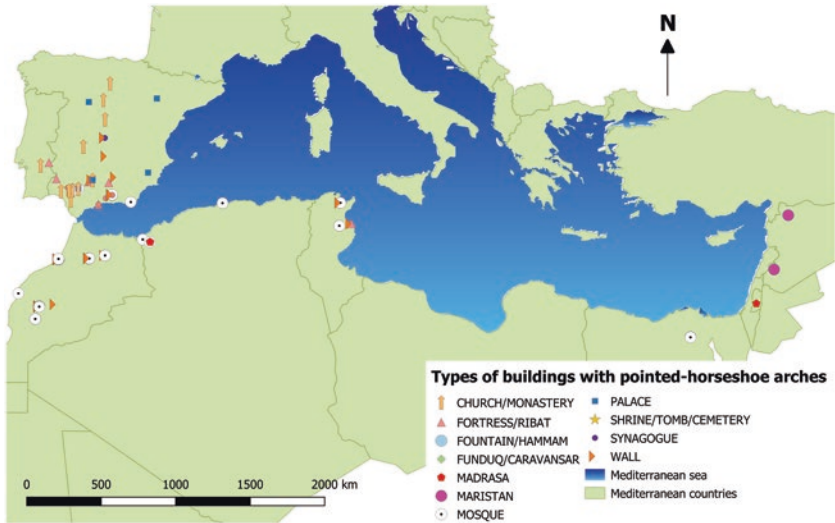


Fig. 13.4 Distribution of buildings with pointed-horseshoe arches throughout the Mediterranean basin (QGIS), María MARCOS COBALEDA

prohibition of introducing corpses into the prayer room of mosques, as the practise was considered impure (Marcos Cobaleda 2018, p. 327–28). Use of a specific type of mosque for funerals was considered by Henri Terrasse a local phenomenon of the city of Fez (Terrasse 1942, p. 23; 1968, p. 22), where the concentration of these constructions is higher than in other parts of the Mediterranean (comprising almost half of the documented examples) (Fig. 13.5). In total, in the framework of the *ArtMedGIS* Project, twelve *Masājid al-Janā'iz* have been documented: a structure that have been identified with one mosque of this type in the Qal'a of the Banū Ḥammād (Golvin 1965, p. 51); 3 *Masājid al-Janā'iz* built during the Almoravid period in Algiers (Berque 1930, p. 62), Fez (Terrasse 1968) and Seville (Ibn 'Abdūn 1981, p. 86); 3 of the Almohad period in Fez (Terrasse 1942, p. 23), Seville (Calvo Capilla 2015, p. 247) and *Cortijo del Centeno* (Lorca, Murcia) (Calvo Capilla 2015, p. 246, 642–43); 3 of the Merinid period, all of them in Fez (Maslow, Lévi-Provençal and Terrasse 1937); 1 rare case of a *muṣallā* than has been interpreted as a *Masjid al-Janā'iz*, built at a very late point during Mamluk rule (at the beginning of the fifteenth century), by the Sultan Faraj Ibn

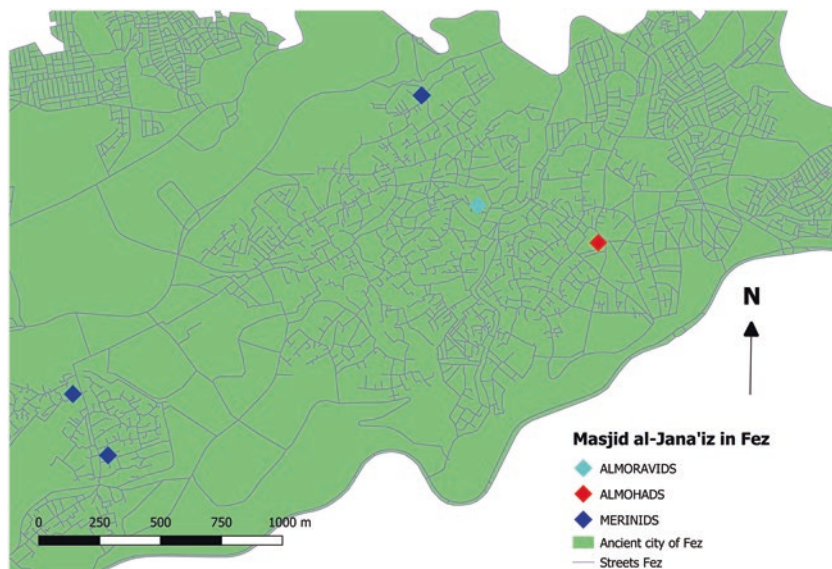


Fig. 13.5 *Masājīd al-Janā'iz* in the city of Fez (QGIS), María MARCOS COBALEDA

Barqūq (Behrens-Abouseif 1992, p. 136); and 1 last case of a *Masjīd al-Janā'iz* in Damascus, mentioned by Henri Terrasse (Terrasse 1942, p. 23), which has not been included in the database because there is no notice about its chronology. Both last examples are the sole ones located in the Eastern Mediterranean and, in the case of the *khanqa* of the Sultan Faraj Ibn Barqūq, there is no building for that purpose. For this reason, it is possible to assert that the construction of *Masājīd al-Janā'iz* was a phenomenon of the Western Mediterranean. On the other hand, thanks to the analysis of the dynasties that built these mosques, it can be concluded that these constructions are clearly linked to the Sunnī Islam, because only the examples of the Almohad period can be more related to the Shī'ī tradition (although this Berber dynasty cannot be considered Shī'ī, properly speaking) (Fierro 2019, p. 29).

In summary, from the analysis of the Almoravid contributions throughout the application of the GIS, it has been possible to review traditional points of view, fixed during a long time in the historiography, which allows

the raising of preliminary hypothesis concerning the important role of political and religious aspects in the arts and architecture, as well as in the review of the ancient concepts of centre and peripheries. In this particular case, the results of the project have implied an advance in the knowledge of the bordering territories and their implications in relation to artistic productions: several parallels across productive centres can be considered, thus enabling a linkage between the same artistic elements, emerging at the same time, in very distant territories. Moreover, application of the GIS methodology has allowed an emphasis on some common points that can be found within the cultural spheres of societies that existed simultaneously in a given territory (the late medieval Mediterranean), namely, the use of the same ornamental elements, beyond the political rule, within a determined geographical area or one's credo. This analysis based on visual and numerical results provided by the GIS has allowed the measuring, in a numerical way, of the phenomena concerning diverse exchanges of different Mediterranean societies that had previously been only studied in an intuitive way.

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